

**The Last (Koy-Yukon) Interglaciation in the Northern Yukon:
Evidence from Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff, Bluefish Basin**
**Indices de la dernière interglaciation (Koy-Yukon) dans l'unité
n° 4 de Ch'ijee's Bluff, bassin du Bluefish, dans le nord du
Yukon**
**Die letzte (Koy-Yukon) Interglazialzeit im nördlichen Yukon:
Belege von der Einheit 4 in Ch'ijee's Bluff, Bluefish Basin**

John V. Matthews, Charles E. Schweger et Jan A. Janssens

Volume 44, numéro 3, 1990

The Last? Interglaciation in Canada
Le dernier (?) interglaciaire au Canada

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/032835ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/032835ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0705-7199 (imprimé)

1492-143X (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Matthews, J. V., Schweger, C. E. & Janssens, J. A. (1990). The Last (Koy-Yukon) Interglaciation in the Northern Yukon: Evidence from Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff, Bluefish Basin. *Géographie physique et Quaternaire*, 44(3), 341-362.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/032835ar>

Résumé de l'article

Les conséquences du réchauffement anthropique attendu pourraient en partie être évaluées à partir de nos connaissances sur les réchauffements climatiques antérieurs. Le réchauffement climatique le plus important s'est produit au cours du dernier interglaciaire (stade isotopique 5). Dans le but d'acquérir une meilleure connaissance du climat durant le stade 5, on a créé un important projet multidisciplinaire et multinational (CELIA). On a identifié plusieurs coupes clés dont celle de Ch'ijee's Bluff, de la Porcupine River, dans le nord du Yukon. Les indices fournis par le pollen, les végétaux, les macrofossiles d'insectes et la stratigraphie de Ch'ijee's Bluff démontrent que la partie de l'unité n 4 plus jeune que le tephra de Old Crow et située au-dessus a été déposée durant un intervalle plus chaud qu'aujourd'hui. Quand on a daté à 85 ka BP le tephra de Old Crow, on présumait que l'intervalle de réchauffement subséquent était corrélatif au stade isotopique 3. Les nouvelles dates le font maintenant remonter à 140-150 ka BP, ce qui signifie que le réchauffement climatique appartient plutôt au stade 5. On lui a attribué le nom informel de « interglaciaire de Koy-Yukon ». On a comparé la séquence de l'unité n 4 avec celle d'autres sites de Béringie qui renferment à la fois le tephra de Old Crow et des dépôts considérés comme étant interglaciaires.

THE LAST (KOY-YUKON) INTERGLACIATION IN THE NORTHERN YUKON: EVIDENCE FROM UNIT 4 AT CH'IJEE'S BLUFF, BLUEFISH BASIN*

John V. MATTHEWS, Jr., Charles E. SCHWEGER and Jan A. JANSSENS, respectively: Geological Survey of Canada, 601 Booth Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0E8; Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E1; Department of Ecology and Behavioral Biology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT The effects of predicted anthropogenic warming can be assessed in part by documenting responses to past warming events. One of the most pronounced warmings was the last interglaciation — stage 5 of the marine isotope record. A large multinational and multidisciplinary project (CELIA) was launched recently in order to gain detailed knowledge of the climate during stage 5. Several key exposures were identified by CELIA; one of them is Ch'ijee's Bluff on the Porcupine River, northern Yukon. Pollen, plant and insect macrofossils and stratigraphic evidence from Ch'ijee's Bluff show that the part of Ch'ijee's Unit 4 that is above and younger than Old Crow tephra (OCt) was deposited during an interval of climate warmer than present. When OCt was dated at 85 ka BP, the subsequent warming interval was presumed to be correlative with the early part of marine isotope stage 3. New dates on OCt show it to be 140-150 ka BP, and this means that the warm interval discussed here is more likely of stage 5 than stage 3 age. We apply the informal epithet, "Koy-Yukon interglaciation", to it and compare the Ch'ijee's Bluff Unit 4 sequence with other east Beringian sites that contain both Old Crow tephra and putative interglacial deposits.

RÉSUMÉ Indices de la dernière interglaciation (Koy-Yukon) dans l'unité n° 4 de Ch'ijee's Bluff, bassin du Bluefish, dans le nord du Yukon. Les conséquences du réchauffement anthropique attendu pourraient en partie être évaluées à partir de nos connaissances sur les réchauffements climatiques antérieurs. Le réchauffement climatique le plus important s'est produit au cours du dernier interglaciaire (stade isotopique 5). Dans le but d'acquérir une meilleure connaissance du climat durant le stade 5, on a créé un important projet multidisciplinaire et multinational (CELIA). On a identifié plusieurs coupes clés dont celle de Ch'ijee's Bluff, de la Porcupine River, dans le nord du Yukon. Les indices fournis par le pollen, les végétaux, les macrofossiles d'insectes et la stratigraphie de Ch'ijee's Bluff démontrent que la partie de l'unité n° 4 plus jeune que le tephra de Old Crow et située au-dessus a été déposée durant un intervalle plus chaud qu'aujourd'hui. Quand on a daté à 85 ka BP le tephra de Old Crow, on présumait que l'intervalle de réchauffement subséquent était corrélatif au stade isotopique 3. Les nouvelles dates le font maintenant remonter à 140-150 ka BP, ce qui signifie que le réchauffement climatique appartient plutôt au stade 5. On lui a attribué le nom informel de «interglaciaire de Koy-Yukon». On a comparé la séquence de l'unité n° 4 avec celle d'autres sites de Bérिंगie qui renferment à la fois le tephra de Old Crow et des dépôts considérés comme étant interglaciaires.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG Die letzte (Koy-Yukon) Interglazialzeit im nördlichen Yukon: Belege von der Einheit 4 in Ch'ijee's Bluff, Bluefish Basin. Die Auswirkungen einer erwarteten anthropogenen Erwärmung kann man teilweise abschätzen, indem man die Ergebnisse vergangener klimatischer Erwärmungen dokumentiert. Eine der herausragendsten klimatischen Erwärmungen war die letzte Interglazialzeit — Stadium 5 des marinen Isotop-Belegs. Kürzlich hat man ein breitangelegtes multinationales und multidisziplinäres Projekt (CELIA) gestartet, um detaillierte Kenntnis über das Klima während des Stadium 5 zu erhalten. CELIA hat mehrere Schlüssel-Schnitte identifiziert; einer davon ist Ch'ijee's Bluff am Porcupine River, nördliches Yukon. Die von Pollen, Pflanzen, Insektenmakrofossilien und Stratigraphie von Ch'ijee's Bluff gelieferten Anhaltspunkte zeigen, dass der Teil der Ch'ijee's-Einheit 4, der über Old Crow Tephra (OCt) liegt und jünger ist, während eines klimatischen Intervalls, das wärmer war als gewöhnlich, abgelagert wurde. Als man OCt auf 85 ka v. u. Z. datierte, nahm man an, dass das folgende Erwärmungs-Intervall mit dem frühen Teil des marinen Isotop-Stadiums 3 korrelierte. Neue Daten auf OCt zeigen, dass dieses 140-150 ka v. u. Z. alt ist, und das bedeutet, dass das warme Intervall, von dem hier die Rede ist, wohl eher dem Stadium 5 als dem Stadium 3 zugehört. Wir benutzen die informelle Bezeichnung "Koy-Yukon Interglazialzeit" und vergleichen die Ch'ijee's Bluff 4-Sequenz mit anderen Plätzen von Ost-Bering, die sowohl Old Crow Tephra enthalten wie auch Ablagerungen, die man für interglaziale Ablagerungen hält.

* Geological Survey of Canada Contribution No. 14490

Manuscrit reçu le 20 avril 1990; manuscrit révisé accepté le 4 juin 1990

INTRODUCTION

From 1975 until 1985 the Quaternary stratigraphy and paleoenvironmental history of the northern Yukon was studied by a multidisciplinary and multi-institutional team working under the umbrella of the Yukon Refugium Project (Morlan, 1980). Much of the research activity of the project was focused on exposures within the Bonnet Plume, Bell, Bluefish and Old Crow basins (Hughes *et al.*, 1981) (Fig. 1). Of these only the Bonnet Plume basin has been glaciated. River bluff exposures in the other basins, particularly Old Crow and Bluefish basins reveal suites of sediments spanning the late Tertiary to the Holocene (Matthews *et al.*, 1987a; Schweger, in press). Exposed sediments in all four basins also record the advance of Late Wisconsinan Laurentide ice onto the east flank of the Richardson Mountains (Fig. 1) either by till as in the Bonnet Plume Basin or by glaciolacustrine sediments as in the Bell, Bluefish and Old Crow basins (Hughes *et al.*, 1981).

One of the river bluff sections that has received intense study during the course of the Yukon Refugium Project is Ch'jee's Bluff (in the past informally designated "Twelvemile Bluff", "HH-228", "Big Bluff" and "Porcupine Loc. 100"), on the Porcupine River, 9.7 km southwest of the village of Old Crow (Fig. 1) (Matthews *et al.*, 1987b). This 4 km long exposure is located approximately in the centre of the Bluefish Basin. Unit 4 at Ch'jee's Bluff contains both Old Crow tephra, an important stratigraphic marker for Alaska-Yukon (Westgate, 1988; Westgate *et al.*, 1985) and organic horizons containing pollen, bryophyte fragments, vascular plant macroremains such as seeds and needles and various types of insect fragments.

These fossils portray some unique and heretofore poorly documented details of the late Pleistocene climate of the northern Yukon. In particular they provide definite evidence of the last interglaciation, which is here informally named the "Koy-Yukon interglaciation" (a reinterpretation of the "Koy-Yukon thermal event" discussed in Schweger and Matthews, 1985 and below). Elements of this history have been recounted elsewhere (Schweger and Matthews, 1985); new evidence presented here requires revision of previous concepts and conclusions. Ch'jee's Bluff is an important datum for study of the last interglaciation in northern North America and because of this it has been designated as one of a number of northern reference sites scheduled for detailed study under project CELIA (Climate and Environment of the Last Interglacial in Northern North America).

METHODS

Ch'jee's Bluff is a large and stratigraphically complex section, with precipitous parts of it being essentially inaccessible. The following discussion concerns data collected at several stations located along the length of the section (Fig. 2), particularly Station 4, where the most detailed study of the interglacial sediments has been conducted.

Samples for pollen analysis were collected from a cleaned exposure at a number of levels, with the most complete series coming from Station 4 (Fig. 2). A zinc bromide (ZnBr_2) heavy liquid processing technique was employed to concentrate fossil pollen. One to four microscope slides per sample were counted

in order to reach a sum greater than 200 grains; in some cases the entire prepared sample was examined. Because it is not possible to compute sedimentation rates with the information at hand, no effort was made to calculate pollen influx values.

Sediments examined for macrofossils were collected at selected levels within Unit 4. The size of most samples was at least 1 kg, except for Sample N (initial volume — 30 kg). The smaller samples were sieved with 40 mesh/inch sieves and all residue >40 mesh examined and picked for fossils. If the volume of sediment was too great to permit use of this technique, a fraction of the >40 mesh residue was examined for plant and insect macrofossils then the remainder processed using a light oil flotation technique (Coope, 1979) to concentrate the insect fragments.

GEOGRAPHIC AND CLIMATIC SETTING

Ch'jee's Bluff is located in the Bluefish Basin (Fig. 1), one of several structural basins that interrupt the Porcupine Plain and Plateau physiographic region of the northern Yukon (Bostock, 1948). Both the Bluefish Basin and adjacent Old

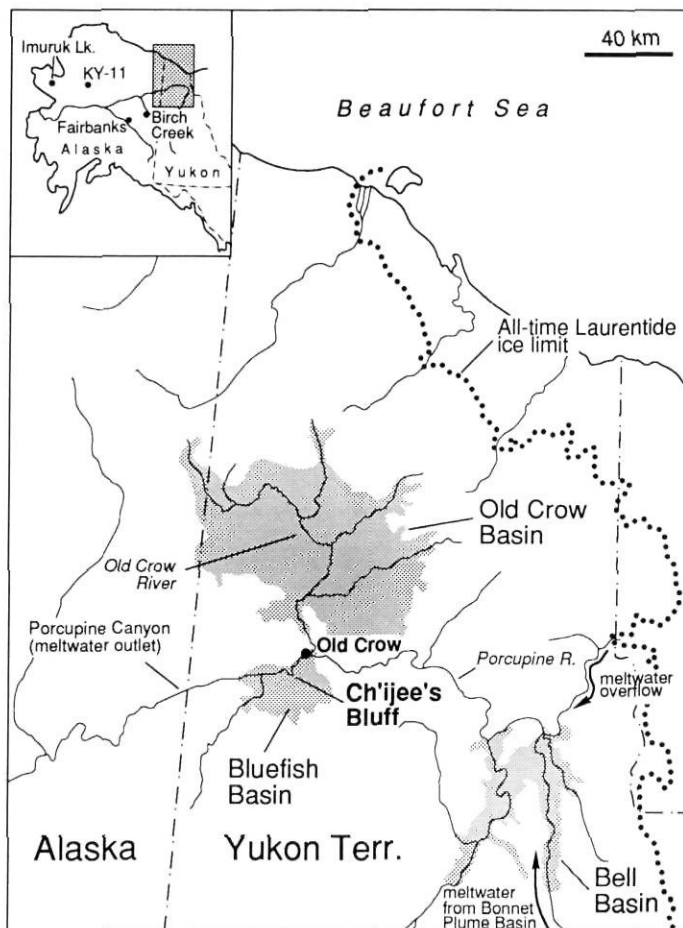


FIGURE 1. Regional map showing location of Ch'jee's Bluff, Bluefish and Old Crow basins and other sites in Alaska (inset map) which are mentioned in the text.

Carte de localisation de Ch'jee's Bluff, des bassins de Old Crow et de Bluefish et des autres sites en Alaska (carton) dont on parle dans le texte.

Crow Basin contain a thick sequence of Neogene sediments. The bases of some of the river bluffs are of late Tertiary age, and similar sediments continue beneath the surface for hundreds of metres (Lawrence, 1973; Matthews and Ovenden, in press).

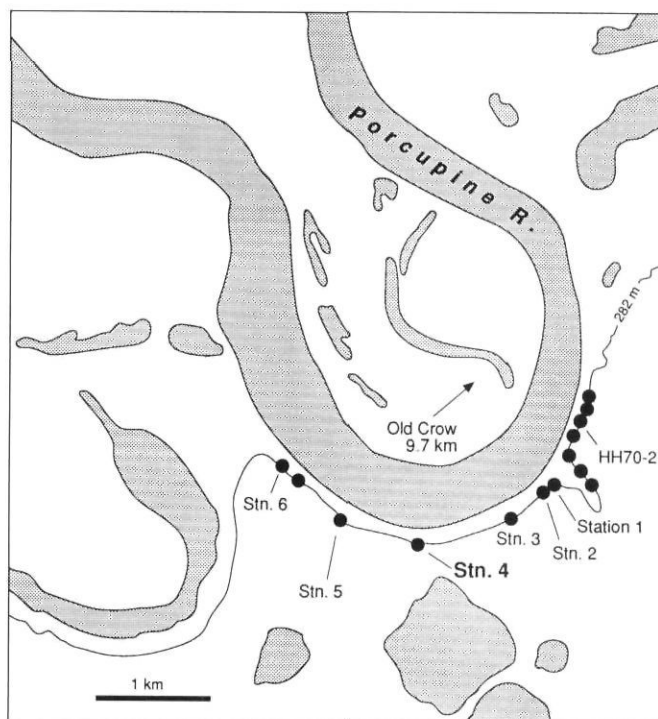


FIGURE 2. Location of sample stations at Ch'ijee's Bluff.
Emplacements des sites d'échantillonnage à Ch'ijee's Bluff.

Old Crow and the Ch'ijee's Bluff exposures are within a small area differing from the surrounding region by slightly lower mean annual temperatures (below -10°C) and slightly higher mean July temperatures (Wahl and Goos, 1987), indicating a higher degree of climatic continentality. Mean annual precipitation is between 200 and 300 mm/yr. Although the better drained areas in the Old Crow region are forested with typical northern conifer vegetation, the large area of poorly drained terrain within the basins causes trees to be scarce. Regional tree line crosses the Old Crow Basin with a few trees barely colonizing the drainages of streams entering the Old Crow Basin from the north (Fig. 1). Further detail on regional vegetation is provided in Cwynar (1982), Welch and Rigby (1971), Ovenden and Brassard (1989) and Ritchie (1984). Bluefish Basin lies within the High Subarctic Ecoclimatic Region (Ecoregions Working Group, 1989). The boundary between discontinuous and continuous permafrost zones passes through or very near Bluefish Basin; as a consequence, the region contains areas of both high-centred and low-centred ice wedge polygons.

STRATIGRAPHY OF CH'IJEE'S BLUFF

Hughes (1972) was the first to systematically describe the Ch'ijee's Bluff section in a modern context, and his generalized stratigraphic framework is still applicable. Six major units are evident (Fig. 3).

UNIT 1

Unit 1 is usually exposed as a gently sloping bench at the base of the section. It is composed of partly oxidized and iron-cemented alluvial sand, grit and minor gravel with interstitial clay. Lenses of organic detritus with abundant pieces of conifer

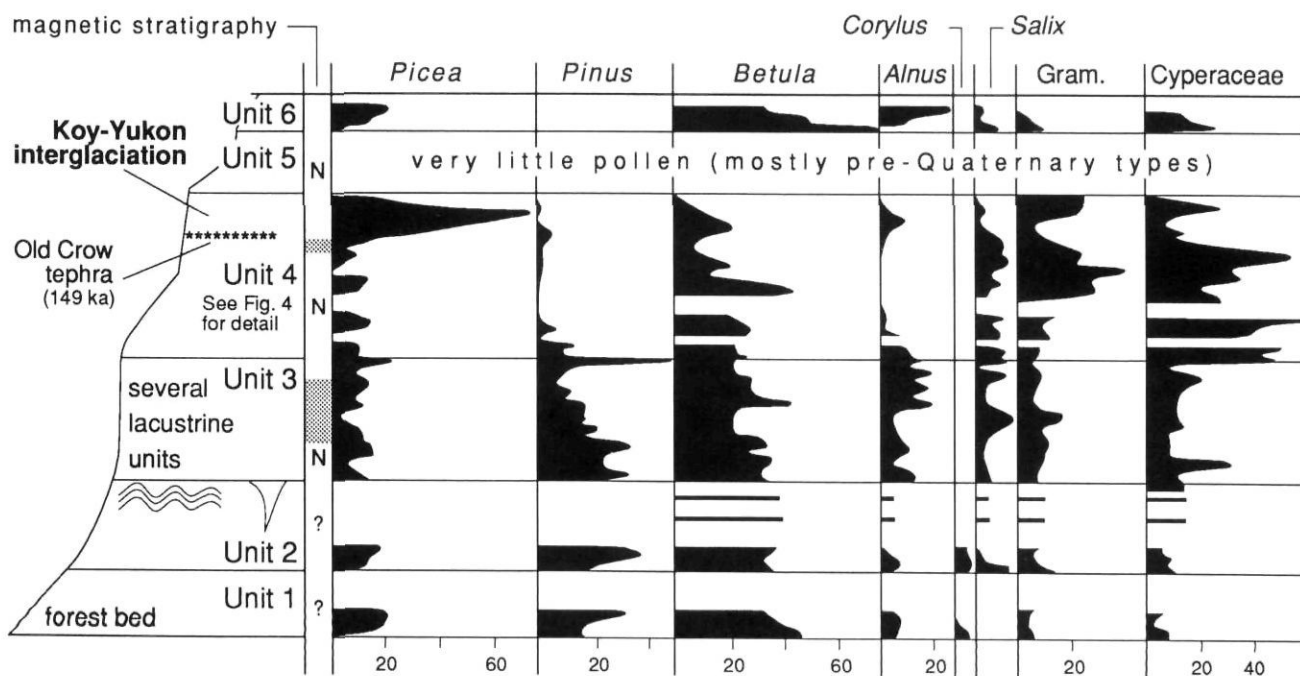


FIGURE 3. Generalized stratigraphy palynology (modified from Lichti-Federovich, 1974) and magnetic polarity record (Pearce et al., 1982) of Ch'ijee's Bluff.

Stratigraphie palynologique généralisée (modifiée à partir de Lichti-Federovich, 1974) et les données de polarité magnétique (Pearce et al., 1982) de Ch'ijee's Bluff.

wood up to 50 cm diameter, conifer cones (e.g., from spruce, two-needle and five-needle pine, larch) and other macrofossils occur in places (Matthews *et al.*, 1987b; Matthews and Ovenden, in press). Early pollen work (Lichti-Federovich, 1974) showed significant percentages of spruce (*Picea*), pine (*Pinus*) and hazel (*Corylus*) in this unit. Two-needle pines now grow near Dawson City, approximately 450 km to the south; modern representatives of five-needle pines grow no closer than approximately 2200 km south of the site.

UNIT 2

Resting unconformably on Unit 1, the basal part of Unit 2 comprises uncemented but irregularly oxidized sand with minor gravel and silt lenses. The unit grades upward into bedded sand and silt. A zone of pronounced frost involutions and occasional ice-wedge pseudomorphs occurs within the upper metre. There are only scant pollen data and no macrofossil data from Unit 2. The basal sediments show relatively high percentages of spruce and enough pine to suggest that both were growing near the site, or at least in the northern Yukon.

UNIT 3

Unit 3, 20 m thick, forms a nearly vertical face clearly visible along the entire length of the bluff. It consists of beds of dark grey to dark brownish grey silty clay to clayey silt, some laminated, others massive. Most of the sediments were probably deposited in a large lake or lakes that filled the Bluefish basin and Old Crow basins during the early Pleistocene or late Tertiary (Heginbottom and Vincent, 1986; Schweger, in press) possibly due to movement on one of the many faults that cross the Porcupine River (Norris, 1976). The unit contains a magnetically reversed interval (Fig. 3) which may represent the upper part of the Matuyama chron (Westgate *et al.*, 1985). Thus Unit 3 is at least 700 ka BP in age. A major hiatus, probably including most of the middle Pleistocene is represented by the unconformable boundary of Units 3 and 4. Unlike glaciolacustrine sediments higher in the section, Unit 3 contains adequately preserved pollen. High pine percentages probably mean that pine was growing in the region at the time of deposition. Few samples from Unit 3 have been studied for plant and insect macrofossils, but those that have contain *Larix* and in one case a fossil of the extinct beetle *Micropeplus hopkinsi*.

UNIT 4

Primarily because it contains the Old Crow tephra (OCt), a key marker horizon for correlation of the Early Wisconsinan deposits in east Beringia (Westgate *et al.*, 1983; Westgate *et al.*, 1985; Schweger and Matthews, 1985), Unit 4 has been studied in more detail than any of the other units of Ch'ijee's Bluff. Much of our argument concerning the interglacial age of the sediments in the upper part of Unit 4 relies on the accuracy of the latest dating of OCt at 149 ka BP by Westgate (1988). OCt was deposited when climate at Ch'ijee's Bluff was much colder than now (see below), a fact which supports the new date, because at 149 ka, the tephra fall occurred during marine isotope stage 6, a period of worldwide cold climate.

There is not, however, universal agreement on the age of OCt. A recent discussion of its age (Béget *et al.*, 1990) sug-

gests the tephra fall may have occurred as long ago as 230 ka BP. If this were so, it would be difficult to maintain that Unit 4 sediments and fossils discussed here referred to the last interglacial. This new age estimate is the result of an extrapolation rather than a new date. Furthermore, some of its implications with respect to the glacial history of east Beringia (e.g., no Illinoian age glaciations in the Canadian Cordillera — Matthews *et al.*, 1990) are nearly incredible. For purposes of this paper, we reject the extrapolated age of Béget *et al.* (1990) and accept Westgate's (1988) isothermal fission track date as the best current age estimate.

Figure 4 shows a summary and interpolation of the stratigraphy at five different stations where Unit 4 is exposed (Fig. 2). Three sub-units are recognized.

Unit 4a, 5-8 m in thickness, consists largely of alluvial sand and gravel containing occasional wood fragments and lenses of organic detritus and other paludal deposits. The lower contact is unconformable and sharp; the upper boundary with Unit 4b is gradational. A few ice-wedge pseudomorphs occur in the sand and gravel of Unit 4a, but they do not form continuous horizons as is the case higher in the section. At Station 5 Unit 4a contains two organic horizons associated with paleosols (Fig. 4).

Unit 4b, consists of 4-6 m of fine alluvial sand, lacustrine silt and organic silt or peat formed in fens and bogs. As indicated earlier, it contains Old Crow tephra (Schweger and Matthews, 1985; Westgate *et al.*, 1983). It also contains a paleomagnetic excursion several metres below OCt which has been recorded in a similar stratigraphic position with respect to OCt at several other sites in eastern Beringia (Westgate *et al.*, 1985). In as much as the OCt is now dated at 149 ka BP, this excursion is not likely to be the Blake event as originally proposed (Schweger and Matthews, 1985).

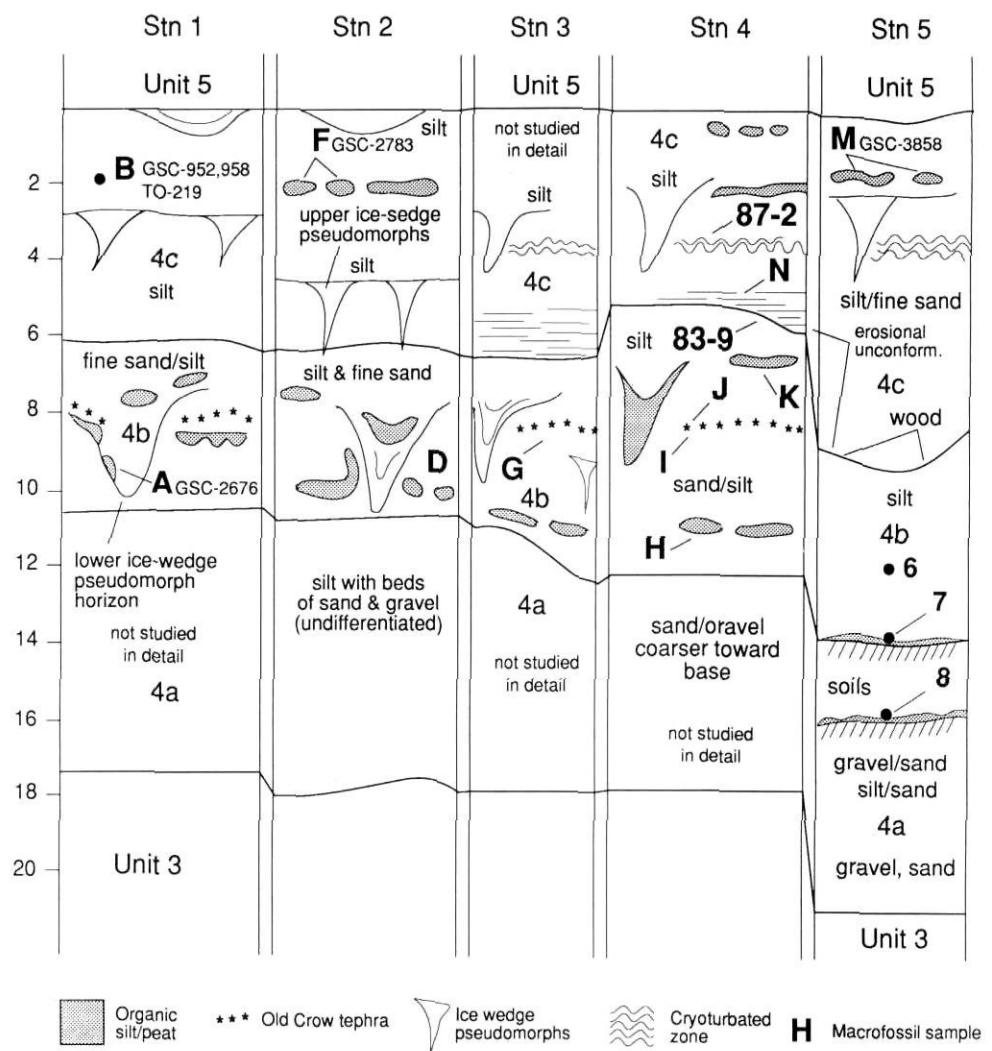
One laterally continuous horizon of ice-wedge pseudomorphs as well as several intermittent peat horizons occur in Unit 4b. At some sites the pseudomorphs intrude the tephra, showing that the ice wedges formed during or shortly after tephra deposition. This implies a cold climate — colder than at present — in agreement with pollen and macrofossil evidence from samples associated with the tephra (see below).

The lowest of the peat beds in Unit 4b (source of macrofossil Sample H) is well below the level of OCt and therefore older than 150 ka BP (Westgate, 1988 and below). Another intermittent organic horizon occurs slightly below Old Crow tephra and in some places is seen to be slumped into the ice-wedge pseudomorphs (Fig. 4). One of these organic horizons, represented by Sample A at Station 1 is dated at >53 ka BP (Table 1: GSC-2676), but its position with respect to the tephra means that it is at least as old as 150 ka BP (see below and Westgate, 1988).

The upper parts of Units 4b and 4c were studied in detail only at Station 4, which also happens to mark the last known downstream occurrence of Old Crow tephra. At Station 4 the sediments are primarily silt and fine sand with several organic to peaty horizons. One of the latter fills an ice-wedge pseudomorph located at about the same level as others in Unit 4b.

FIGURE 4. Simplified and interpolated stratigraphy of Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff (see Fig. 2 for location of stations). Bold-faced letters and numbers indicate macrofossil and pollen samples discussed in the text and shown in Tables II, III, IV, V and VI.

Stratigraphie simplifiée et interpolée de l'unité n° 4 de Ch'ijee's Bluff (voir l'emplacement des sites à la fig. 2). Les lettres et les chiffres en caractères gras identifient les macrofossiles et les échantillons de pollen dont on parle dans le texte et dans les tableaux II à VI.



Neither the tephra, peats, nor the lower pseudomorph zone are evident in the upper part of Unit 4b downstream from Station 4 (Fig. 4). They were probably removed during a phase of planation and downcutting, which may have been associated with the start of the alluvial cycle responsible for the lower part of Unit 4c.

Unit 4c (6-10 m thick) consists mostly of silt and sand, with abundant woody or peaty concentrations and like Unit 4b also contains a conspicuous horizon of ice-wedge pseudomorphs, though somewhat smaller than those of the lower zone. The lowest sediments in 4c are lacustrine and alluvial silt with local concentrations of wood including logs up to 25 cm in diameter. The lacustrine sediments give way higher in the section to a zone of tightly folded cryoturbation structures, which are stratigraphically below the upper most pseudomorph horizon. Both the cryoturbation horizon and the pseudomorph zone are seen at other stations along the length of the exposure (Fig. 4). The pseudomorph horizon in Unit 4c is truncated at several stations. At some sites a discontinuous peat horizon formed of autochthonous pond deposits and dated at >37 ka BP at Station 2 (Sample F: GSC-2783, Fig. 4, Table I) occurs in the upper part of Unit 4c.

Another intermittent organic horizon occurs higher in Unit 4c, e.g., approximately 1-2 m beneath the contact with Unit 5 at Station 5 (Sample M, Fig. 4). It has been dated at >47 ka BP (GSC-3858, Fig. 4, Table I), which is perplexing in view of finite dates of 32 and 30.5 ka BP (GSC-952) from an equivalent or lower level at one of the upstream stations (Sample A at Station 1, Fig. 4, Table I). The most plausible explanation for this discrepancy is that the peat at Station 5 though somewhat fibrous and appearing to be autochthonous is of thaw lake origin and potentially contains rebedded, older wood and other organic debris.

At several stations (e.g., Stations 1 and 2, Fig. 4) channel or sag structures occur at the contact of Units 4c and 5. Some probably represent ice bodies which thawed when the region was inundated by the lake responsible for Unit 5 sediments. Others may be channels cut at about the time of meltwater flooding of the basin.

UNIT 5

In a previous description of the Ch'ijee's Bluff exposure (Matthews, 1975), Unit 4a and combined Units 4b and 4c were assigned to individual units. Thus Unit 5 of that study is not the

TABLE I
Radiocarbon Dates from Ch'jee's Bluff

Date No.	Age	Unit/Station	Material	Comments
GSC-121	10 740 ± 180	6	peat	Marly peat approx. 1.1 m below surface. Associated with pollen data published by Lichti-Federovich (1974)
GSC-952	32 400 ± 770	4c/1	shells	<i>Psidium</i> shells from a zone 1.5-2.4 m below top of Unit 4 which is rich in shelly material, including ostracods as well as plant and insect macrofossils (Matthews, 1975; Blake, 1984).
TO-219	30 590 ± 220	4c/1	shells	Accelerator date from same sample of <i>Psidium</i> shells used for GSC-952. Associated with macrofossil Sample B (see also Matthews, 1975)
GSC-199	>41 300	4b/6	wood	1.6 m below top of Unit 4 (McAllister and Harington, 1969; Lichti-Federovich, 1974; C. R. Harington, pers. comm., 1990). Approximately the same horizon as sample for GSC-952
GSC-958	>37 000	4c/1	wood	Wood from approximately same level as GSC-952. Probably rebedded from an older unit
GSC-1189	>39 000	4c?/6	organic detritus	5.2 m below top of Unit 4. Not shown on Figure 3. Associated with pollen sequence in Lichti-Federovich (1974).
GSC-2676	>53 000	4b/1	wood	<i>Salix</i> fragments isolated from autochthonous peat filling and adjacent to large ice wedge pseudomorph and below Old Crow tephra (Blake, 1984). Hence actual age is >150 000 ka BP.
GSC-2783	>37 000	4c/2	wood	Woody fragments isolated from pond peat sampled for pollen and macrofossils (Sample F in Tables II and III) (Blake, 1984).
GSC-3858	>47 000	4c/5	wood	Wood fragments isolated from discontinuous peat approximately 1 m below top of Unit 4 (Blake, 1984). Overlying massive silt contains fossils indicating start of meltwater inflow to the basin. The peat is now thought to represent basal organics of a thaw lake deposit; hence dated material is likely to be rebedded from an older unit. See sample M in Tables III and V.

same as Unit 5 of this report. In this paper Unit 5 is defined as the sequence of ice-rich glaciolacustrine silt and clay that caps Unit 4. It liquefies and flows when exposed, which causes distinctive retrogressive-thaw/flow slides at the top of the section. Similar features are seen at the tops of river exposures throughout the Old Crow and Bluefish Basins.

The silt and clay of Unit 5 is glaciolacustrine in origin and was deposited when glacial meltwater was diverted into the area starting at approximately 30 ka BP. A date from another exposure in the Bluefish Basin (HH75-24: McCourt, 1982) shows that the highest lake level may not have been attained until after 20.8 ka BP (GSC-3964: Blake, 1987). In the nearby Old Crow Basin dates on fluvial sediments capping the same glaciolacustrine unit indicate that the lake was in the process of draining by 12.5 ka BP (I-3574: Blake, 1984; Harington, 1977).

Unit 5 is notable because of its low organic content. Organic debris such as have been seen in all other units are absent. Even pollen is rare, probably because the sediments were deposited rapidly in a large, deep lake. Of the palynomorphs that are present, most are pre-Quaternary types.

UNIT 6

Unit 6 consists of 1.2 to 6 m of silt with wood and organic detritus grading upward into woody peat. Most of the silt is probably fluvial with local lenses of pond sediment. The peat near

the top is locally overlain by up to one-half metre of cliff-top loess. Unit 6 contains large ice-wedges. They intrude sediments as old as 10.7 ka BP and may have started to form during the early Holocene. Some of them display flat tops which are below the current permafrost table, indicating a period of deeper regional thawing during the Holocene. At least one ice wedge at Ch'jee's Bluff contains a rejuvenated wedge on top of a thawed down wedge signifying a subsequent period of cooling only slightly before the present.

PALYNOLOGY

SPECTRA FROM STATIONS OTHER THAN STATION 4

Lichti-Federovich (1974) conducted the first detailed pollen study of Ch'jee's Bluff. Her samples came mostly from a downstream section (Station 6, Fig. 2) but the uppermost ones, including several associated with Old Crow tephra (Table II), come from Station HH70-2 at the upstream end of the section (Fig. 2).

Pollen samples have been collected immediately above and below OCt at Station 4, but have yielded very poorly preserved, rare pollen. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to samples from another station in order to determine environmental conditions at the time of the tephra fall. Two such samples (1 and 2, Table II) were analyzed by Lichti-Federovich but never published by her. Both are from Station HH70-2 shown in Figure 2. One was

collected 12 cm above and the other 8 cm below the tephra. The one above the tephra is dominated by Cyperaceae pollen which might be the result of temporary vegetation caused by disturbance associated with the ash fall. One of the authors (CES) has demonstrated a similar abrupt shift to high Cyperaceae percentages in samples immediately above the

Little Timber tephra, an early Quaternary to late Tertiary tephra in the Old Crow Basin. The pollen sample from below Old Crow tephra (Sample 1, Table II) contains a low percentage of spruce (*Picea*), high percentage of birch (*Betula*) and relatively high percentages of grass (Gramineae) and sedge (Cyperaceae). It suggests that the tephra was deposited when birch-

TABLE II
Miscellaneous pollen samples from Ch'ijee's stations other than Station 4^a

Sample Number	1 ^b	2 ^c	3	5	6	7	8 ^d	9 ^e
Station	70-2	70-2	1	2	5	5	5	5
Equivalent Macro. Sample.			A	F				M
Unit #	4b	4b	4b	4c	4a	4a	4a	4c
<i>Picea</i>	7	4		32	+	+		2-21
<i>Pinus</i>	1			+		+		
<i>Larix</i>				+				+
<i>Alnus</i>		1	+	8		2		1-2
<i>Betula</i>	7	40	6	13	6	45	12-38	10-16
Coryloid type						+	0-+	
<i>Salix</i>	11	8	2	5	4	3	3-11	2-5
<i>Populus</i>				+				
Cyperaceae	49	11	78	28	86	32	44-74	44-65
Gramineae	14	28	8	6	2	8	1-5	10-16
<i>Artemisia</i>	+		+	+	1	1	1-2	+
Other Compositae	1	1	2		1			
Ericaceae	+	+		5		5	0-1	+
Rosaceae undif.			+	1	1	1	2-5	1
<i>Rosa</i> type								+
<i>Rubus chamaemorus</i>				+				
Liliaceae								+
<i>Potentilla</i> undif.				+				+
<i>Chenopodium-Amaranthus</i>	3		2					1-2
Umbelliferae				1				1
<i>Valeriana</i>								1
Caryophyllaceae	1	+	+		1	1	0-1	
<i>Polemonium</i>			+			1		
<i>Epilobium</i>							0-2	
<i>Ranunculus</i> type	+	+						
<i>Thalictrum</i>	+	+				+	+	
<i>Caltha</i> type						1	0-1	+ -2
<i>Phlox sibirica</i>	+		+					
POLLEN SUM	257	364	479	518	200	288	200	200-519
Unknown Pollen	+	+						+ -2
Indeterminable			19	3	18	10	6-20	3-7
<i>Lycopodium</i>	+			1				+ -1
<i>Sphagnum</i>			1	2		3	0-27	1-3
Monolete spore	+					1	0-1	0-1
Trilete Spore	+		+					0-1
<i>Pediastrum</i>				1				
<i>Botryococcus</i>				2				
Pre-Quat. palynomorphs				+				1

a. All samples studied by CES except 1 and 2 which were studied by Lichti-Federovich and first published in Schweger and Matthews (1985). All pollen percentages are rounded to the nearest whole value; therefore, some totals may not sum to 100%.

b. Lichti-Federovich sample HH 70-2b (0.4a): Approximately 12 cm above Old Crow tephra

c. Lichti-Federovich sample HH 70-2b (0.16b): Approximately 8 cm below Old Crow tephra

d. Range of values for two samples (Sch 4-7-81-23&24) from the same autochthonous peat; pollen total for both = 200 grains

e. Range of values for four samples from same stratigraphic horizon.

f. + indicates values less than 1%

STATION 4 POLLEN DATA

The most important sequence of pollen samples discussed here is from Station 4 (Fig. 5) because it yielded several samples that undoubtedly represent interglacial conditions. The diagram charts samples collected over a 5 m vertical interval starting about 60 cm below OCt, with emphasis on the 2.5 m of the section known to include macrofossils indicative of warm climate. Unfilled bars in the *Picea* column of Figure 5 represent the results of preliminary counts on additional samples located between the level of Old Crow tephra and the base of Unit 4c.

The diagram shows a high peak of spruce pollen similar to that recorded from Unit 4 by Lichti-Federovich (1974) (Fig. 3) at Station 6 more than 1.5 km downstream from Station 4 (Fig. 2). The fact that this feature is seen at two widely separated stations means that it is more likely to reflect regional than local vegetation — always a concern when dealing with pollen from alluvium. Not evident in Figure 5 are the relatively high percentages of pine (well above trace levels) which Lichti-Federovich noted from Unit 4 (Fig. 3). This difference may be due to the fact that Lichti-Federovich's samples came from a part of the section with a significant erosional hiatus between Units 4b and 4c. In other words, the pine pollen in her spectra may be rebedded from older units. Indeed, the recast of her data presented in Figure 3 shows a small peak of pine pollen at about the position of this unconformity — exactly what would be expected if the pine pollen was rebedded from older sediments. Lichti-Federovich's spectra also differ from those in Figure 5 by having relatively high percentages of *Alnus* coincident with the peak in *Picea*. We have no explanation for this except that it may be due to differences in local vegetation at the two sites.

The pollen spectra associated with macrofossil Sample N (710-720 cm interval, Fig. 5) show approximately 15-20% *Picea*, 10% to almost 60% *Betula*, less than 10% *Salix*, 5-20% Cyperaceae and in one sample greater than 15% Gramineae pollen. These assemblages resemble modern surface pollen spectra from the northern Yukon except that *Alnus*, normally a major constituent in northern surface spectra, is present only as a trace. There is a trace of *Typha* pollen in one of these samples, which is significant because *Typha* does not occur as far north today (Fig. 6a). Two to four percent pine (*Pinus*) pollen occurs in one of the samples. Trace amounts of pine pollen are often seen in the northern Yukon, which is well beyond the northern limit of pines. But low *Pinus* percentages do not necessarily mean that pines were far from the site. One of the authors (CES) has recorded modern *Pinus* pollen percentages in the 2-7% range at the regional limit of *P. contorta* in the central Yukon (Hughes *et al.*, 1981).

The spectra from the 710 and 720 cm levels probably represent regional vegetation composed of a mixture of boreal plants (*Picea*, *Betula*, *Alnus*, *Shepherdia canadensis*), floodplain taxa (Gramineae, Chenopod-Amaranthus, *Artemisia*, other Compositae) and pond plants (*Salix*, Cyperaceae, *Potentilla palustris*, *Typha*).

Spruce percentages peak at greater than 65% in the sand between 740 and 760 cm and remain above 30% in all but one sample up to the 850 cm level. These values are much higher

than is normally seen in surface samples from the region and must mark extensive tracts of closed spruce forest as opposed to the open spruce forests of the present. As with the other samples shown in Figure 5, *Alnus* occurs at frequencies below 10% and often below 4%. As indicated above, this may be a local effect.

Several of the samples in Figure 5 represent Unit 4b which contains OCt. The sample from the 490 cm level, like those associated with OCt at Station HH70-2 (see above), probably represents tundra conditions. Tundra conditions probably did not persist throughout the time represented by Unit 4b because of *Picea* percentages (open bars) rise to a peak at about the 580-590 interval. Macrofossil Sample K comes from about the same level has also yielded a few spruce needles.

PLANT MACROFOSSILS

STATIONS OTHER THAN STATION 4

Table III and IV list plant macrofossils from Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff. Table IV includes taxa identified in samples collected only at Station 4.

During deposition of Sample A, shrub birches grew close enough to contribute abundant nutlets or samaras, but the site of deposition was obviously a damp depression as signified by the abundance of achenes of *Carex aquatilis*. As indicated below, some of the insect fossils show that the peat from which this sample comes is autochthonous. Presence of abundant fungal sclerotia in a sample such as A is also usually a good indication that the sediments represent a surface or soil.

Fossils from Sample B at Station 1 have been discussed elsewhere (Matthews, 1975). All that need be noted here is that *Picea* was represented by a single needle, which might be a contaminant rebedded from older sediments.

The mosses from Sample F at Station 2 suggest a rich-fen assemblage indicating moderate minerotrophy and aquatic habitat. No upland taxa are represented. The Amblystegiaceae species suggest a non-shaded environment. *Carex* achenes, mostly *Carex aquatilis*, account for 70% of the vascular plant macrofossils. They are accompanied by other wetland taxa like *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Potentilla palustris*, and *Ranunculus trichophyllus* type. Some of the *Menyanthes* seeds from Sample F are as small or smaller than 2 mm, a condition rarely seen in Quaternary assemblages, but relatively common in late Tertiary plant assemblages from the Arctic (Matthews and Ovenden, in press).

The pollen sample associated with Sample F contains a high percentage of *Picea* (see above). A few spruce needles are present in the macrofossil sample, but they certainly are not abundant as in some of the samples from Station 4 (see below). It is noteworthy that arboreal type birch nutlets are also present in Sample F. This supports the pollen evidence that vegetation (and climate?) was similar to that of the present.

Sample G comes from immediately beneath OCt at Station 3. At this site, in contrast with the situation at Station 4, the tephra is rebedded. Nevertheless, the macrofossil content of the sample is similar to those immediately above and below the tephra at Station 4.

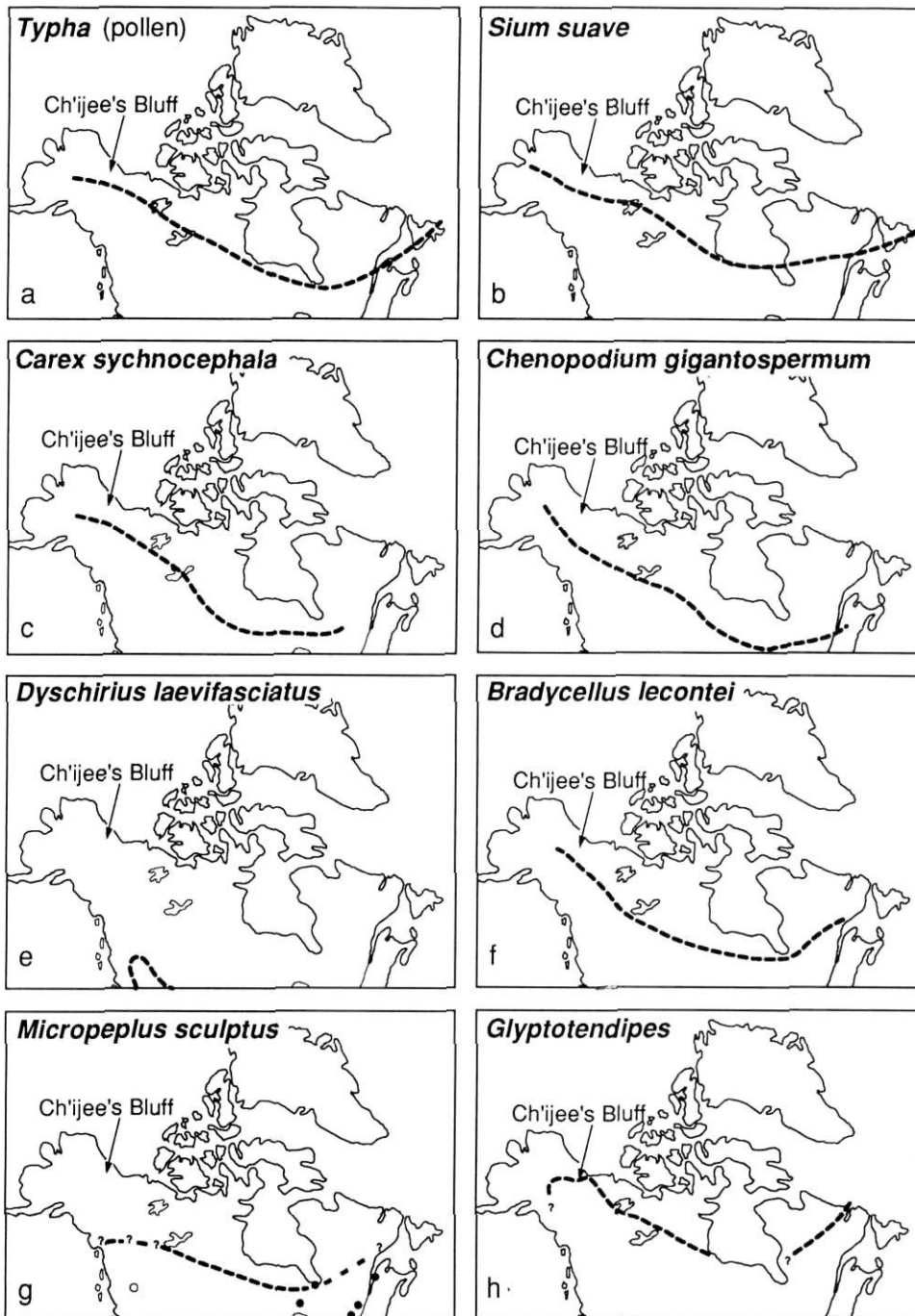


FIGURE 6. Present distribution of some plants and insects from interglacial units at Ch'ijee's Bluff. Distribution of plants in a, b, and c from Porsild and Cody (1980); *Chenopodium gigantospermum* (d) is from Bassett and Crompton (1982). Distribution of the carabid beetles *Dyschirius laevifasciatus* (e) and *Bradycellus lecontei* (f) from Lindroth (1968), Bousquet (1988) and D. Kavanaugh (California Acad. of Sciences, pers. comm., 1988). Distribution of the micropepline beetle *Micropeplus sculptus* (g) from J. M. Campbell (1978 and pers. comm., 1990). The rarity of *M. sculptus* localities is indicated by the dots; the open circle signifies a provincial locality only. Distribution of the chironomid fly *Glyptotendipes* (h) is from I. Walker, Queen's University (pers. comm. 1990) and Wiens *et al.* (1975).

Répartitions actuelles de quelques végétaux et insectes observés dans les unités interglaciaires de Ch'ijee's Bluff. Répartitions des végétaux (a, b et c) selon Porsild et Cody (1980); de *Chenopodium gigantospermum* (d) selon Bassett et Crompton (1982); de *Dyschirius laevifasciatus* (e) et de *Bradycellus lecontei* (f) selon Lindroth (1968), Bousquet (1988) et D. Kavanaugh (California Acad. of Sciences, comm. pers., 1988); de *Micropeplus sculptus* (g) selon J. M. Campbell (1978 et comm. pers., 1990) (les rares sites de *M. sculptus* sont indiqués par des points; le cercle blanc montre un site uniquement provincial); de *Glyptotendipes* (h) selon I. Walker (Queen's University, comm. pers., 1990) et de Wiens *et al.* (1975).

Sample M contained few plant macrofossils. This may mean that despite its apparent fibrous character it is well sorted, a condition seen in the basal peat of thaw lakes. Normally fungal sclerotia are abundant in autochthonous deposits. In this case they likely owe their abundance to sorting associated with the development of a thaw lake.

STATION 4 PLANT MACROFOSSILS

Macrofossils from Unit 4 Station 4 are listed in Table IV. Sample H comes from a peaty horizon well below the lowermost ice wedge pseudomorph horizon and well below Old Crow tephra, making it older than 150 ka BP. Species compo-

sition of the mosses and the relative species diversity are an excellent representation of a minerotrophic fen (rich-fen). *Sphagnum squarrosum* and *Drepanocladus fluitans* indicate a slight acidophylous influence, possibly caused by accumulation of the autochthonous peat. The only upland moss species, represented by a single poorly preserved fragment, is *Dicranum groenlandicum*. No clear indication of shading is suggested, except by the presence of *Sphagnum squarrosum*. Vascular plant fossils from Sample H are dominated by *Carex aquatilis*. The presence of *Potentilla palustris* and *Menyanthes trifoliata* supports the conclusion based on bryophyte fossils, i.e., it was not a seasonally dry site.

TABLE III
Plant Macrofossils from Ch'ijee's Bluff, Unit 4 (excluding Station 4)

Taxa	Stn-1 A	Stn-1 B	Stn-2 F	Stn-3 G	Stn-5 M	Taxa	Stn-1 A	Stn-1 B	Stn-2 F	Stn-3 G	Stn-5 M
Fungal sclerotia	++				++	Chenopodiaceae					
Bryophytes ^a	+	+		+	+	<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.	+				
<i>Calliergon giganteum</i> (Schimp.) Kindb.			+			Caryophyllaceae					
<i>Drepanocladus</i> sp.			+			<i>Stellaria</i> sp.	+				
<i>Drepanocladus exannulatus</i> (B.S.G.) Warnst.			+			genus?	+		?		
<i>Drepanocladus crassicosatus</i> Janssens			+			Nymphaeaceae					
Pinaceae						<i>Nuphar</i> sp.			+		
<i>Picea</i> sp.		+	+	+		Ranunculaceae					
Sparganiaceae						<i>Ranunculus hyperboreus</i> Rottb.				+	
<i>Sparganium hyperboreum</i> Laest.			+			<i>R. trichophyllus</i> type		+			
Potamogetonaceae						<i>R. pedatifidus</i> Sm.		cf.			
<i>Potamogeton praelongus</i> type	+					<i>Ranunculus</i> sp.	+				
<i>P. filiformis</i> Pers.		?				Cruciferae					
<i>P. Richardsonii</i> (Benn.) Rydb.		+				<i>Rorippa islandica</i> type				+	
<i>Potamogeton</i> sp.			+	+		Rosaceae					
Cyperaceae						<i>Potentilla palustris</i> (L.) Scop.				+	
<i>Carex aquatilis</i> Wahlenb.	++		?	?	+	<i>Potentilla</i> sp.	+	+			
<i>Carex</i> spp.		+	+	++		<i>Rosa acicularis</i> Lindl.				?	
<i>Eleocharis palustris-uniglumis</i> typ.	+	+	+		+	<i>Rubus idaeus</i> type				+	
<i>Eleocharis</i> sp.			+	+		Haloragaceae					
Araceae						<i>Hippuris</i> sp.				+	
<i>Calla palustris</i> L.			+			Gentianaceae					
Salicaceae						<i>Menyanthes trifoliata</i> L.				+	
<i>Salix</i> sp.	+					<i>Menyanthes</i> small type				+	
Betulaceae						Compositae					
<i>Betula</i> sp. (large shrub/tree type)			+			genus?	+				
<i>Betula</i> sp. (dwarf shrub type)	++		+								

+ = taxon present; ++ = taxon abundant; ? = identification questioned due to poor preservation; cf. = taxon well enough preserved for identification but identification is tentative.

a. Bryophytes studied by JJ only for Sample F

Samples I and J come from immediately below and above Old Crow tephra, respectively. The tephra at Station 4 has not been rebedded and appears to have been deposited in hummocky terrain, containing an abundance of willow (represented by upright stems, buried by the tephra). One of the samples contains a *Picea* needle, but this may be rebedded from an older deposit. Fruits of *Potamogeton* are abundant in the sample below the tephra. This, along with abundant *Carex* achenes and fruits of *Ranunculus trichophyllus* type suggests an aquatic environment. As indicated below the insect fossils do not support this conclusion.

The peat of macrofossil Sample K may be correlative with the one represented by Sample A at Station 1. Fossils are rare and those present offer little evidence except they do show that climate was not too cold for *Menyanthes*, a plant which does not grow in areas colder than low arctic tundra. The pollen data (Fig. 5) also suggest that Sample K was deposited during a period of relatively warm climate, at least warmer than during deposition of OCT.

Pollen data associated with sample 83-9 suggest birch-dominated shrub tundra. This is definitely not the conclusion to be drawn from the macrofossil list, containing taxa such as

Sagittaria, *Carex sychnocephala* and *Ceratophyllum demersum*. Among the macrofossils are a few needles of *Picea*. Strangely, even though *Betula* is the most abundant pollen taxon in samples associated with 83-9, birch macrofossils were not seen.

Two macrofossil samples, N and 87-2 (Fig. 4) from Station 4 come from the zone of the pollen diagram containing highest percentages of *Picea* pollen. They stand apart from the others at the section by their diversity of taxa (a minimum of 78 species) among which are several that today do not now occur as far north as the site (Fig. 6b, 6c and 6d).

Sample N is from the basal 20 cm of Unit 4c at Station 4. Its sediments contain an abundance of snails and pelecypods and evidently represent an ox-bow pond. As indicated in Figure 4, similar sediments are found for some distance along the length of the exposure so it is probable that the ox-bow meander was at least as large as those typical of the present river system.

The most common species of mosses in assemblage N (Table IV) is *Hylocomium splendens*, represented by perfectly preserved sympodially branched fragments. This growth form is commonly found under well-developed coniferous forest can-

TABLE IV

Plant Macrofossils from Ch'jee's Bluff, Unit 4 at Station 4

Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2	Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2
Fungal sclerotia	++							Salicaceae							
Characeae								Salix sp.	+	+					+
Chara sp.							+	Betulaceae							
Nitella sp.							+	Betula sp. (shrub species)	+					+	+
Bryophytes ^a		+	+		+			Polygonaceae							
Hylocomium splendens								*Polygonum lapathifolium L.						+	+
(Hedw.) B.S.G.						++		Polygonum amphibium type							+
Calliergon giganteum								Rumex maritimus L.					+		+
(Schimp.) Kindb.	+							Chenopodiaceae							
Sphagnum squarrosum Crome	+						+	Chenopodium sp.						+	+
Sphagnum sect. Acutifolia						+	+	**C. gigantospermum Aellen						+	
Sphagnum sect. Cuspidata							+	Corispermum hyssopifolium L.						+	
Tomenthypnum nitens								Caryophyllaceae							
(Hedw.) Loeske						+		Moehringia sp.						?	
Drepanocladus sp.	++							Ceratophyllaceae							
Drepanocladus uncinatus							+	*Ceratophyllum demersum L.					+	+	+
(Hedw.) Warnst.						+	++	Nymphaeaceae							
Drepanocladus exannulatus								Nuphar sp.						+	
(B.S.G.) Warnst.	+							Ranunculaceae							
Drepanocladus fluitans								Ranunculus sp.						+	
(Hedw.) Warnst.	+							*R. sceleratus type						+	+
Meesia triquetra (Richt.) Angstr.	+							R. hyperboreus Rottb.					+	+	+
Aulacomnium palustre								R. trichophyllum type		++				+	+
(Hedw.) Schwaegr.	+							R. pensylvanicus/Macounii type						+	
Bryum pseudotriquetrum (Hedw.)	+							Anemone narcissiflora L.						+	
Dicranum groenlandicum Brid.	+							Cruciferae							
Scorpidium scorpioides								Rorippa islandica type					+	+	+
(Hedw.) Limpr.				+				Rosaceae							
Isoetaceae								Potentilla sp.		++	++			+	+
Isoetes sp.						?		Potentilla palustris (L.) Scop.	+				+	+	+
Pinaceae								Potentilla norvegica L.					+	+	+
*Picea sp.	+	+		+	+	++	+	Rosa sp.			+				
Juniperus communis L. (seed)						+		Rubus idaeus type	+					+	
Typhaceae								**Rubus spectabilis Pursh.						cf.	
Typha sp.							+	Haloragaceae							
Alismaceae								Hippuris sp.						+	+
**Alisma gramineum K. C. Gmel.						+		Myriophyllum spicatum type						+	
Alisma sp.							++	Umbelliferae							
*Sagittaria cuneata Sheld.					+	+		**Sium suave Walt.						+	
Sparganiaceae								Genus?					+		+
Sparganium hyperboreum Laest.						+	+	Ericaceae							
Sparganium sp.						+		Empetrum nigrum L.						+	+
Potamogetonaceae								Arctostaphylos alpina/rubra type						+	
Potamogeton praelongus typ.						+		A. uva-ursi (L.) Spreng.						+	
P. zosteriformis Fern.						+		Andromeda polifolia L.						+	+
P. filiformis Pers.						+		Primulaceae							
P. Richardsonii (Benn.) Rydb.						+		Primula sp.						+	
P. pectinatus L.						+	+	Cornaceae							
Potamogeton sp.	++				+	+	+	*Cornus stolonifera Michx.						+	
Najadaceae								Cornus suecica L.						+	
Najas flexilis (Willd.)						+		Gentianaceae							
Gramineae								Menyanthes trifoliata L.	+			+		+	
*Glyceria sp.						+	+	Menyanthes small type						+	+
Beckmannia Syzigachne								Labiatae							
(Steud.) Fern.							+	*Mentha sp.						+	+
Hierochloa sp.						?	?	**Stachys sp.						+	
Cyperaceae								*Scutellaria galericulata L.						+	
Carex aquatilis Wahlenb.	++	?	?			+		Compositae							
Carex chordorrhiza L.	+					+		**Bidens frondosa type						+	
Carex diandra type						+									
Carex rostrata Stokes						+	+								
**Carex sychnocephala Carey					+	+	++								
Carex spp.		++	++		+	+									
Eleocharis acicularis (L.) R.&S.							++								
E. palustris-uniglumis typ.					+	+	+								
Eriophorum sp.						+									
Scirpus validus Vahl.						+	+								
**Scirpus microcarpus Presl							cf.								

a. Bryophytes studied by JJ only for Samples H, N and 87-2

+ = taxon present; ++ = taxon abundant; ? = identification questioned due to poor preservation; cf. = taxon well enough preserved for identification but identification is tentative. *indicates taxa which seldom occur beyond tree line and have a northern distributional limit near Ch'jee's Bluff today. **indicates taxa which apparently have their present northern distributional limit significantly south of Ch'jee's Bluff.

opy. *Drepanocladus uncinatus* is also associated with mesic forest floor vegetation. *Sphagnum* and *Tomenthypnum nitens* indicate the presence of minerotrophic wetland habitats, in this case possibly small woodland depressions or the shoreline of an ox-bow pond.

Many of the vascular plant taxa in Sample N are either aquatic or hygrophilous in habit, as would be expected of a quiet backwater or cut-off meander of a large stream. Preservation of many of the fossils is exceptional. For example, though it is not unusual to find gemmules of freshwater sponges in Pleistocene samples, clusters of them still attached to their substrata are rare. Many of the *Carex* fossils still retain their enclosing perigynium, some of the *Potamogeton* fruits still possess the exocarp and mesocarp, rarely observed on fossils. In addition to abundant spruce needles (most of them the white spruce type — lacking resin canals), spruce seeds and spruce cone fragments, the sediments even contain spruce sporangia, still packed with pollen.

At least seven of the vascular plant species listed for Sample N are not currently found as far north as Ch'ijee's Bluff. Some of these are illustrated in Figure 7. Many other vascular plants from Sample N are restricted to sites within tree line and thus are at their regional limit at Ch'ijee's Bluff. Clearly the lacustrine sediments at the base of Unit 4c at Station 4 were deposited when climate was warmer than at present. No estimate of the actual difference in mean July temperature or any other mean value is possible because the autecology of the taxa represented by the fossils is little known. Furthermore most of them are aquatic or near aquatic species which are known sometimes to be unreliable indicators of macroclimatic conditions.

The macrofossil sample labeled 87-2 comes from the cryoturbated zone which can be seen in approximately the same position at a number of stations (Fig. 4). Plant fossils are abundant, yet not as diverse in the pond sediments of Sample N. The dominant moss, *Sphagnum*, suggests an allochthonous assemblage. All taxa represented indicate a wetland habitat, probably quite minerotrophic. The vascular plant macrofossils also suggest a wetland habitat. *Eleocharis acicularis* rarely represented in fossil assemblage from northern Canada is dominant. The species grows today on muddy shorelines. Fruits of *Alisma* are also abundant. No species of this genus occur in the Yukon today (Porsild and Cody, 1980).

Although there is always a danger in using negative evidence, there is one plant which is notable because of its absence from assemblages N and 87-2. These are the distinctive seeds of the extinct genus *Aracites*, which is thought to be a member of the family Araceae. *Aracites* seeds are extremely indurate and readily identified, so if they were growing anywhere in the vicinity of the pond which formed the base of Unit 4c, they would likely have occurred as fossils. They are abundant in most Tertiary assemblages from the north, including Ch'ijee's Unit 1 (Matthews and Ovenden, in press) and even occur in interglacial sediments in Labrador (Klassen *et al.*, 1988). Proof that they had become extinct in the north before the time of the last interglaciation would make them a potentially valuable fossil for correlating interglacial deposits from different sites.

INSECT AND OTHER ARTHROPOD FOSSILS

STATIONS OTHER THAN STATION 4

Tables V and VI list taxa of insects, other arthropods and animal fossils (excluding vertebrates) recovered from various levels of Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff. The fossils from Station 4 are shown in Table VI. The same convention on the use of asterisks to designate taxa of potential climatic significance is used in Table VI as for plants in Table IV.

The poorly sorted character of the organic residue of Sample A from the ice wedge pseudomorph (Fig. 4), its high content of fungal sclerotia and particularly the inclusion of such fossils as those of larval click beetles (Elateridae: *Ctenicera*, Table V) suggest that the peat is an organic paleosol. The abundance of fossils of the beetles *Helophorus*, *Ochthebius* and *Stenus* shows that the site was poorly drained. Bark beetles (Scolytidae) and other taxa directly associated with trees are conspicuously absent; however, because the macrofossils include fossils of ants (Hymenoptera: Formicidae) and of Coleoptera such as *Helophorus oblongus* and *Agonum quinquepunctatum*, neither of which range far beyond tree line today, we believe tree line at the time of deposition may have been located in the northern Yukon only slightly south of the site.

The fossils from Sample B at Station 1 have been discussed previously (Matthews, 1975) and are listed here only for the sake of comparison. They are the only ones in Unit 4 to come from a level with a finite ¹⁴C date. The original sample from which fossils were extracted was small compared to others discussed here, this probably being the chief reason for the low fossil diversity. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the insects from this sample appear to be more indicative of cold tundra-like conditions than those in most of the other samples. A particularly interesting fossil, which was not noted in 1975, is the weevil *Connaticheila artemisiae*, a species which, as the name implies, feeds on *Artemisia*. The Sample B assemblage is the only one from Unit 4 to contain the weevil *Stephanocleonus* (formerly listed as *Cleonus*), which is another taxon often seen in sediments deposited in dry tundra.

Insect fossils are relatively rare in Sample F, but include among the dominating aquatic and semi-aquatic component a few fossils of beetles, such as the carabid *Diacheila polita*, which usually live in mesic tundra sites. *Olophrum rotundicollis* is abundant as would be expected of the sedge-dominated margin of a subarctic pond. Sample G yielded very few insect fossils other than fragments of the weevil *Lepidophorus lineaticollis*. Fossils were more abundant in Sample M. Unless they are rebedded from older sediments, the fossils of the ground beetle *Blethisa catenaria* in Sample M probably imply existence of tree line conditions shortly before deposition of Unit 5 (Nelson, 1983; Morgan *et al.*, 1986).

STATION 4 ARTHROPOD FOSSILS

A few arthropod fossils have been recovered from the peat of Sample H (Fig. 4) below OCt. The most important fossil is the one representing the ground beetle species *Patrobis septentrionis*. In North America, this species is seldom found beyond tree line except on the Pribilof Islands and coastal

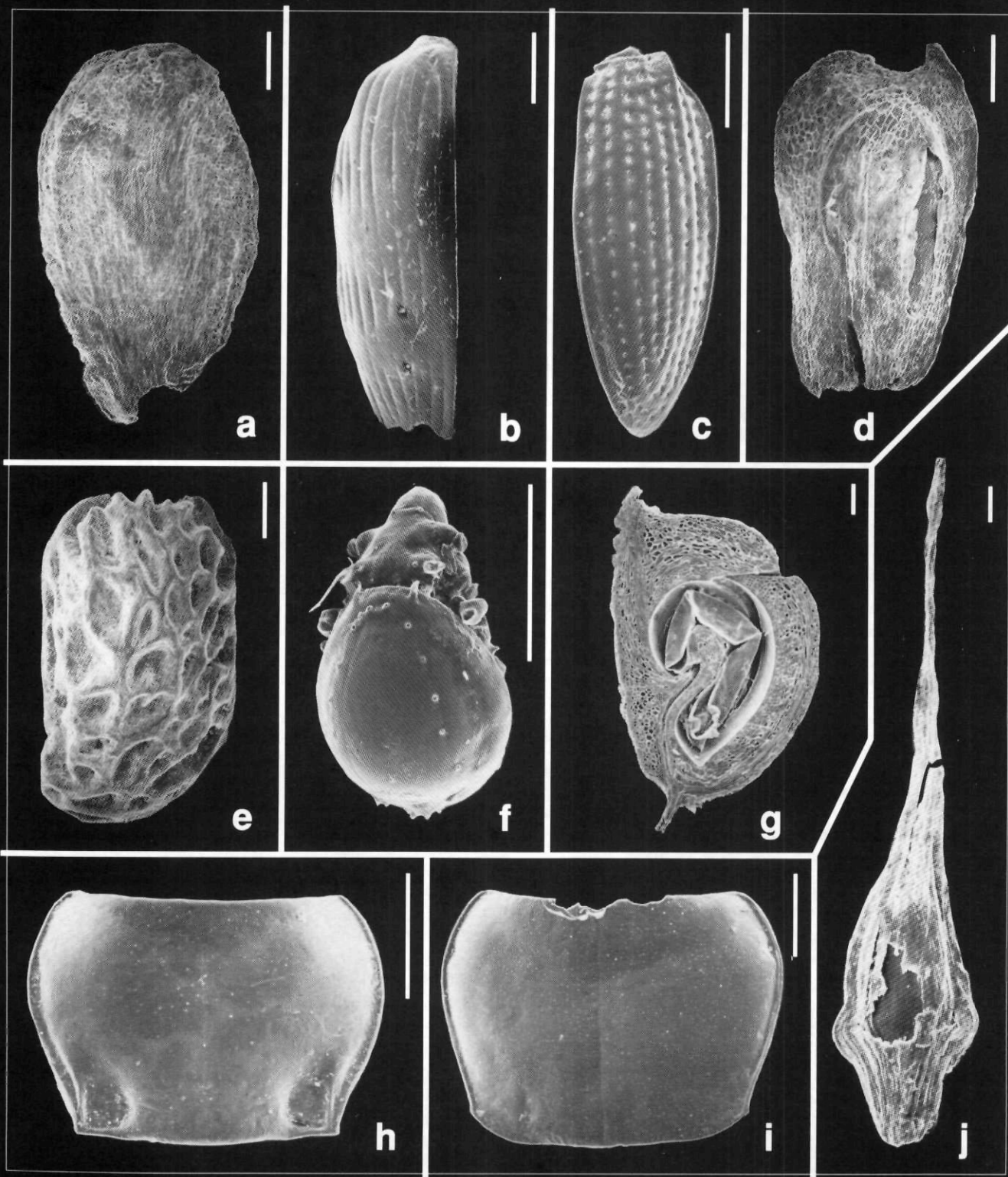


FIGURE 7. Scanning electron micrographs of selected plant and arthropod macrofossils from Ch'ijee's Bluff Unit 4. Scale bar = 300 μ . a) Plant: *Alisma gramineum* K. C. Gmel. (Alismataceae); GSC-98839 (SEM neg. 40.438); fruit; Station 4, macrofossil Sample N; b) insect: *Dyschirius laevifasciatus* Horn (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98840 (SEM neg. 40.307); fragment of left elytron showing patches with effaced striae: Station 4, Sample N; c) insect: Coleoptera: Elmidae; GSC-98841 (SEM neg. 40.421); right elytron; Station 4, Sample N; d) plant: *Sagittaria cuneata* Sheld. (Alismataceae); GSC-98842 (SEM neg. 40.439); fruit; Station 4, Sample N; e) plant: *Rubus cf. spectabilis* Pursh. (Rosaceae); GSC-98843 (SEM neg. 40.380); endocarp; Station 4, Sample N; f) oribatid mite: *Epidamaeus cf. E. tenuissimus* Hammer (Acari: Damidae); GSC-98844 (SEM neg. 40.392); dorsal view; Station 1, Sample A; g) plant: *Potamogeton pectinatus* L. (Potamogetonaceae); GSC-98845 (SEM neg. 40.371); sectioned fruit; Station 4, Sample N; h) insect: *Bembidion convexulum* Hay (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98846 (SEM neg. 40.431); pronotum; Station 4, Sample N; i) insect: *Bradycellus lecontei* Ciski (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98847 (SEM neg. 40.441); pronotum; Station 4, Sample N; j) plant: *Carex sychnocephala* Carey (Cyperaceae); GSC-98848 (SEM neg. 40.366); perigynium with achene showing in torn area; Station 4, Sample N.

Micrographies par balayage électronique de végétaux et de macrofossiles d'arthropodes choisis de l'unité n° 4 de Ch'ijee's Bluff. Échelle = 300 μ . a) Végétal: *Alisma gramineum* K. C. Gmel. (Alismataceae); GSC-98839 (SEM neg. 40.438); fruit; site n° 4, échantillon de macrofossile N; b) insecte: *Dyschirius laevifasciatus* Horn (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98840 (SEM neg. 40.307); fragment d'élytre droit montrant des parties où les stries sont effacées: site n° 4, échantillon N; c) insecte: Coleoptera: Elmidae; GSC-98841 (SEM neg. 40.421); élytre droit; site n° 4, échantillon N; d) végétal: *Sagittaria cuneata* Sheld. (Alismataceae); GSC-98842 (SEM neg. 40.439); fruit; site n° 4, échantillon N; e) végétal: *Rubus cf. spectabilis* Pursh. (Rosaceae); GSC-98843 (SEM neg. 40.380); endocarpe; site n° 4, échantillon N; f) oribate: *Epidamaeus cf. E. tenuissimus* Hammer (Acari: Damidae); GSC-98844 (SEM neg. 40.392); vue dorsale; site n° 1, échantillon A; g) végétal: *Potamogeton pectinatus* L. (Potamogetonaceae); GSC-98845 (SEM neg. 40.371); fruit sectionné; site n° 4, échantillon N; h) insecte: *Bembidion convexulum* Hay. (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98846 (SEM neg. 40.431); pronotum; site n° 4, échantillon N; i) insecte: *Bradycellus lecontei* Ciski (Coleoptera: Carabidae); GSC-98847 (SEM neg. 40.441); pronotum; site n° 4, échantillon N; j) végétal: *Carex sychnocephala* Carey (Cyperaceae); GSC-98848 (SEM neg. 40.366); périgyne (la graine apparaît dans la déchirure); site n° 4, échantillon N.

TABLE V

Arthropod and other Animal Macrofossils from Ch'ijee's Bluff, Unit 4 (excluding Station 4)

Taxa	Stn-1 A	Stn-1 B	Stn-2 F	Stn-3 G	Stn-5 M
PORIFERA					
HAPLOSCLERINA					
Spongillidae					
<i>Spongilla</i> type			+		
ANNELIDA					
TUBELLARIA			+		
BRYOZOA					
<i>Cristatella mucedo</i> Cuv.			+		
INSECTA					
HEMIPTERA (various fragments)					
Saldidae	+				
Gerridae	+				
Lygaeidae?		+			

Taxa	Stn-1 A	Stn-1 B	Stn-2 F	Stn-3 G	Stn-5 M
HOMOPTERA					
Cicadellidae	+			+	
COLEOPTERA					
Carabidae					
<i>Pelophila borealis</i> Payk.	+				
<i>Blethisa catenaria</i> Brown					+
<i>Elaphrus lapponicus</i> Gyll.		+			
<i>Diacheila polita</i> Fald.	+		+		
<i>Dyschirius frigidus/subarcticus</i> type	+				
<i>Bembidion dauricum</i> Motsch.	+				
<i>Bembidion (Peryphus)</i> sp.		?			
<i>Bembidion</i> sp.			+	+	
<i>P. (Cryobius) gerstlensis</i> Ball	cf.				
<i>P. (Cryobius) soperi</i> Ball		+			
<i>P. (Cryobius) kotzebuei</i> Ball		?			
<i>P. (Cryobius) tareumiut</i> Ball		+			
<i>P. (Cryobius) parasimilis</i> Ball		+			
<i>P. (Cryobius) pinguedineus</i> Eschz.	+				
<i>P. (Cryobius) brevicornis</i> Kby.	+	+			+
<i>P. (Cryobius) nivalis</i> Sahlb.		+			
<i>P. (Cryobius) ventricosus</i> Eschz.		+		+	
<i>P. (Cryobius)</i> spp.		+			
<i>Pterostichus costatus</i> Men.		+			
<i>Pterostichus haematopus</i> Dej.		+			
<i>*Agonum quinquepunctatum</i> Motsch.	+				
<i>Amara alpina</i> Payk.	+	+			
<i>Amara bokeri</i> Csiki		?			
<i>Amara patruelis</i> type	cf.				
<i>Trichocellus mannerheimi</i> R. Sahlb.	+				
Dytiscidae					
<i>Agabus/lybius</i>	+		+		
<i>Colymbetes</i> sp.		+	+		
Dytiscidae undet.			+		+
Hydrophilidae					
<i>Hydrobius</i> sp.	+				
<i>Helophorus splendidus</i> J. Sahlb.					+
<i>*Helophorus oblongus</i> LeC	+				
<i>Helophorus</i> spp.	+				
<i>Cercyon marinus</i> Thoms.	+		cf.		
Hydraenidae					
<i>*Ochthebius marinus</i> (Payk.)	+				
<i>*Ochthebius kaszabi</i> Janssens	+				
<i>Ochthebius</i> sp.					+
Staphylinidae					
<i>Eucnecusum/Arpedium</i> type			+		
<i>Olophrum boreale</i> (Payk.)			+		
<i>Olophrum rotundicollis</i> Sahlb.			++		
<i>Micralymma</i> sp.	+				
<i>Boreaphilus henningianus</i> C. R. Sahlb.	+		+		
<i>Stenus</i> sp.	++		++		+
<i>*Euaesthetus</i> sp.	+		+		+
<i>Lathrobium</i> sp.	+				+
<i>Tachinus</i> sp.	+				+
<i>Tachinus brevipennis</i> J. Sahlb.	+				
<i>Tachyporus</i> sp.	+				

+ = taxon present; ++ = taxon abundant; ? = identification questioned due to poor preservation; cf. = taxon well enough preserved for identification but identification is tentative. * indicates taxa which seldom occur beyond tree limit and have a northern distributional limit near Ch'jee's Bluff today. 1. Identified by V. Behan-Pelletier, Agriculture Canada, Ottawa

TABLE VI
*Arthropod and other Animal Macrofossils from Ch'ijee's Bluff,
 Unit 4 at Station 4*

Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2	Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2
PORIFERA								Hydrophilidae							
HAPLOSCLERINA								<i>Hydrobius</i> sp.							+
Spongillidae								* <i>Helophorus lacustris</i> type							+
<i>Spongilla</i> type						+	+	<i>Helophorus</i> spp.			+	+		+	+
ANNELIDA								<i>Cercyon marinus</i> Thoms.						cf.	+
HIRUDINEA						+		<i>Hydrophilus</i> sp.							+
TUBELLARIA						+		Genus?							+
BRYOZOA								Hydraenidae							
<i>Cristatella mucedo</i> Cuv.					+	+		<i>Ochthebius marinus</i> (Payk.)							+
<i>Fredericella</i> sp.						+		<i>Ochthebius kaszabi</i> Janssens							+
<i>Plumatella</i> sp.					+			<i>Ochthebius</i> sp.			+			+	+
INSECTA								Staphylinidae							
ODONATA						+		<i>Bledius</i> spp.							+
HEMIPTERA								Aleocharinae, genus?							+
Corixidae						+		<i>Eucnecosum/Arpedium</i> type			+			+	+
Gerridae						+		<i>Olophrum boreale</i> (Payk.)						+	+
Family?						+		<i>Olophrum latum</i> Makl.			+				+
HOMOPTERA								<i>Olophrum consimile</i> Gyll.							+
Cicadellidae		+	+	+				<i>Olophrum rotundicole</i> Sahlb.							+
Psyllidae		+					+	<i>Acidota</i> sp.							+
COLEOPTERA								<i>Micralymma</i> sp.				+	+	+	+
Carabidae								<i>Boreaphilus henningianus</i>							
<i>Nebria</i> sp.							+	C.R. Sahlb.							?
<i>Diacheila polita</i> Fald.						+	+	<i>Omalium</i> sp.							+
<i>Blethisa multipunctata</i> L.						+	+	<i>Stenus</i> sp.			+				+
<i>Loricera</i> sp.							+	<i>Euaesthetus</i> sp.			+				?
<i>Dyschirius</i> sp.						+	+	<i>Lathrobium</i> sp.							+
** <i>D. laevifasciatus</i> Horn						+	+	<i>Tachinus</i> sp.				+			
* <i>Patrobus septentrionis</i> Dej.		+				+	+	<i>Tachinus apterus</i> grp.				+	+	+	+
* <i>Bembidion concolor</i> Kirby						+	+	<i>Tachyporus</i> sp.						+	+
<i>Bembidion concretum</i> Csy.						+	+	Aleocharinae							+
* <i>Bembidion convexulum</i> Hay.						+	+	<i>Gymnusa</i> sp.						+	
<i>Bembidion grapei</i> Gyll.						+	+	Micropeplidae							
<i>Bembidion intermedium</i> Kirby						+	+	** <i>Micropeplus sculptus</i> LeC.						+	
* <i>Bembidion quadrimaculatum</i> Lec.						+	+	* <i>Micropeplus tessera</i> Curtis							+
<i>Bembidion sordidum</i> typ.						+	+	Silphidae							
<i>Bembidion transparens</i> Gebl.						+	+	<i>Silpha</i> sp.						+	
<i>Bembidion</i> sp.		+			+		+	Leiodidae							
* <i>Pterostichus adstrictus</i> Eschz.						+	+	<i>Agathidium</i> sp.					+		+
<i>P. (Cryobius)</i> sp.		+				+	+	<i>Leiodes</i> sp.							?
<i>P. (Cryobius) ventricosus</i>				+			+	Ptilidae							
<i>Pterostichus haematopus</i> Dej.						+	+	<i>Acrotichus</i> sp.							+
* <i>Agonum consimile</i> Gyll.						+	+	Scydmaenidae							
<i>Agonum</i> sp.					+	+	+	<i>Veraphus</i> type						+	+
<i>Amara</i> sp.				+		+	+	Scarabaeidae							
<i>Harpalus</i> sp.		+				+	+	<i>Aegialia</i> sp.						+	
<i>Trichocellus mannerheimi</i> R. Sahlb.						+	+	Helodidae							
<i>Trichocellus</i> sp.							+	<i>Cyphon</i> sp.						+	+
** <i>Bradycellus lecontei</i> Cisk						+	+	Byrrhidae							
Dytiscidae								<i>Simplocaria</i> sp.							+
<i>Agabus/llybius</i>						+	+	<i>Curimopsis</i> sp.							+
<i>Hydroporus</i> sp.						+	+	<i>Morychus</i> sp.			+	+	+		+
<i>Hygrotus</i> sp.						+	+	<i>Cytilus alternatus</i> (Say)						+	+
<i>Colymbetes</i> sp.			+		+	+	+	*Elmidae			+			+	+
<i>Dytiscus</i> sp.						+	+	*Heteroceridae							
Dytiscidae undet.						+	+	<i>Heterocerus</i> spp.							+
*Noteridae						+	+	Elateridae							
Gyrinidae								<i>Ctenicera sjaelandica</i> (Muller)			+			?	?
* <i>Gyrinus</i> sp.						+	+	Genus?						+	

Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2
Anobiidae							?
Melyridae						+	+
Coccinellidae					+	+	
Cucujidae							
<i>Pediacus</i> sp.							+
Lathridiidae						+	+
Colydiidae						?	
Chrysomelidae							
<i>Donacia</i> sp.			+				
<i>*Bromius obscurus</i> (L.)						+	
Alticinae, genus?						+	
<i>*Cassida flaveola</i> Thumb.							?
<i>Chrysolina</i> sp.			+				
<i>Phaedon</i> sp.						?	
Curculionidae							
<i>Apion</i> sp.				+		+	
<i>Hypera</i> sp.			+				
<i>Lepidophorus lineaticollis</i> Kirby			+	+	+	+	+
<i>Vitavitus thulius</i> Kiss.						+	
<i>*Grypus equiseti</i> (Fab.)						+	
<i>Phytobius</i> (<i>Litodactylus</i> type)						+	
<i>Phytobius</i> sp.							+
<i>Hylobius</i> sp.							+
<i>Ceutorhynchus</i> sp.							+
<i>Rhynchaenus</i> sp.			+				
<i>Lepyrus</i> sp.						+	
<i>Stephanocleonus</i> sp.						?	
Scolytidae							
<i>*Carphoborus</i> sp.						+	+
<i>*Phloeosinus pini</i> Swaine						+	
<i>*Phloeotribus piceae</i> Swaine						+	
<i>*Orthotomicus caelatus</i> (Eich.)						+	
<i>*Pityophthorus opaculus</i> LeC.						+	
TRICHOPTERA							
<i>Brachycentrus</i> typ.						+	
Genus?			+				+
Taxa	H	I	J	K	83-9	N	87-2
DIPTERA							
Tipulidae							+
Chironomidae							
<i>Chironomus</i> type					++	+	+
<i>Glyptotendipes</i> sp.						++	++
Xylophagidae							
<i>Xylophagus</i> sp.				+			
HYMENOPTERA							
Symphyta							
Tenthredinidae							+
Ichneumonidae							+
Formicidae						+	
<i>*Myrmica</i> sp.							+
<i>*Formica</i> type							+
<i>*Camponotus</i> sp.							+
CRUSTACEA							
Notostraca (mandibles)							
<i>Lepidurus</i> sp.							+
Cladocera (ephippia)							
<i>Daphnia</i> sp.			++	+			+
ARACHNIDA							
Acari				+++++			
Damaeidae							
<i>Epidamaeus</i> sp.							+
Hydrozetidae							+
<i>Hydrozetes</i> type						+	+
Araneae							
<i>Erigone</i>			+				+

+ = taxon present; ++ = taxon abundant; ? = identification questioned due to poor preservation; cf. = taxon well enough preserved for identification but identification is tentative. * indicates taxa which seldom occur beyond tree limit and have a northern distributional limit near Ch'jee's Bluff today. ** indicates taxa which apparently have their present northern distributional limit significantly south of Ch'jee's Bluff.

A notable feature of Sample N is the diversity of bark-beetles (Scolytidae). At least four genera are present. 87-2 contained fewer species, probably because of smaller sample size. Although northern samples representing forest conditions usually contain a few bark-beetle fossils, seldom do they contain as many different types as this sample. Detailed study of bark-beetles is obviously a priority for future research.

Another distinctive feature of the Sample N fauna is the presence of fragments representing the Coleoptera families Elmidae and Heteroceridae. Both are essentially absent from the present northern Yukon fauna, though suitable habitat abounds. Significantly, two different species of Heteroceridae are present.

The distinctive ground-beetle *Dyschirius laevifasciatus* (Fig. 7b) lives near rivers, but apparently not much north of west central Alberta (D. K. Kavanaugh, California Acad. of Sciences, pers. comm. 1988; Bousquet, 1988) (Fig. 6e). Its fossils have been found in late Tertiary deposits from the Arctic (Matthews, 1977). This is the first record of its occurrence in a Quaternary age assemblage from the north.

Another ground-beetle, *Bradycellus lecontei* (Fig. 7i) occurs as far north as Dawson City in the Yukon Territory, which is still well to the south of the Old Crow region and Ch'jee's Bluff (Fig. 6f). Fossils of the tiny beetle, *Micropeplus sculptus*, also

occur as rare elements in late Tertiary assemblages from the Arctic (Matthews, 1977). Until now, they have not been seen in Quaternary assemblages from any northern site. The distribution map in Figure 6g shows that there are few collection localities for this species, probably because it occurs in habitat which is rarely collected (J. M. Campbell, Agriculture Canada, pers. comm., 1990). To date the only potential northern record is the provincial record from British Columbia (Campbell, 1978 and J. M. Campbell pers. comm., 1990). We suspect that it occurs as far north as northern British Columbia and southern Yukon, but probably not in the northern Yukon.

Both macrofossil Samples N and 87-2 contain a few fragments of the ground-beetle *Diacheila polita*. This seems to be a contradiction to the remainder of the fauna because in North America *D. polita* is usually found on mesic hypoarctic tundra. When found as a fossil it is usually said to be an indicator of treeless conditions (see above). This is not necessarily so; one of the authors (JVM) has collected *D. polita* well below tree line in a small open moss-dominated depression and it does occur within tree line in northern Scandinavia and Siberia (A. V. Morgan, Univ. of Waterloo, pers. comm., 1990). What the presence of *D. polita* fossils in Samples N and 87-2 probably means is that similar poorly drained, mossy depressions existed within the forest at Ch'jee's Bluff or in the marshy zone surrounding the ox-bow lake.

Larval head capsules of the chironomid fly *Glyptotendipes* occur in Sample N and are abundant in 87-2. It is not usual to see a few chironomid head capsules in such sediments, but the abundance of *Glyptotendipes* is unexpected for such a northern site (I. Walker, Queens University, pers. comm., 1990). As Figure 6h shows it does not extend much beyond tree line today; although specimens have been collected from near Ch'ijee's Bluff in the Bluefish Basin (Wiens *et al.*, 1975).

Many of the insects listed for Samples N and 87-2 in Table VI are taxa that live in or near water. Unlike water plants, aquatic and hygrophilous insects do not appear to be as insulated from macro climatic changes. Thus, the fact that the insect fossils from Samples N and 87-2 display some of the same types of range disjunctions as the vascular plants strengthens our conclusion that the fauna and flora from the pond sediments in Unit 4c actually were deposited under warmer climatic conditions than today. As with the plants, too little is known about the autecology of the key insect species to allow us to infer details of climate change during deposition of lower Unit 4c compared to the present.

DISCUSSION

The climatic questions raised by the International Geosphere Biosphere Program (IGBP) require that we think of world futures in terms of the background of past climate. Some models of future anthropogenic climate change call for mean annual temperatures in the next 200 years to peak at higher levels than have occurred during the last hundred thousand years or more (Dickinson and Cicerone, 1986), *i.e.*, since the last interglaciation or stage 5 of the marine isotope record. Therefore, there is a need for more precise knowledge of the last interglaciation, particularly the way in which the biota responded to warming. Because they were different, we cannot gain information of the last interglaciation by study of the present interglaciation.

During parts of isotope stage 5 of the marine isotope record, the world contained less glacial ice and higher sea levels than at present, equaling or exceeding conditions during the maximum of the present interglaciation (Jouzel *et al.*, 1987; Ruddiman, 1985). July insolation at 65°N was 50% higher than during the past 10,000 years (Bartlein and Prentice, 1989). An integrated study of stage 5 in the northern part of North America has begun under project CELIA (Climate and Environment of the last Interglaciation in Northern North America), an initiative sponsored by the Boreal Institute for Northern Studies at the University of Alberta. Ch'ijee's Bluff has is one of the key project CELIA sites. Hence, what we describe here is merely the introduction and framework for more detailed studies to come in the near future.

THE CLIMATE RECORD OF CH'IJEE'S UNIT 4

If the present date on Old Crow tephra is correct, then in view of the paleoenvironmental data presented here, Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff probably spans a time from the Late Illinoian (start of marine isotope stage 6: Ruddiman, 1985) to the Late Wisconsinan, *i.e.*, it could represent as much as 170 ka. Unit 4c alone may span 100 ka.

Parts of Unit 4a were deposited when climate was cold enough for existence of tundra at Ch'ijee's Bluff pollen samples 7 and 8, Str. 3). Scant evidence from Sample H in Unit 4b suggests that this peat represents a slightly warmer climate which allowed growth of rare trees in the region and the existence of insects that presently do not live far beyond treeline. But much work remains to be done with the lower part of Unit 4 before the details of this history are clear.

Climate was very cold at about the time of deposition of Old Crow tephra and for some time thereafter. However, there is evidence from preliminary study of pollen samples and macrofossil Sample K at Station 4 that climate warmed somewhat after 150 ka BP but prior to the major warm peak in Unit 4c. The lower horizon of ice-wedge pseudomorphs seen along the length of the exposure may be the result of this early warming interval. But pseudomorph horizon may also have resulted from the peak warming during deposition of Unit 4c. In any case these features show that for some period of time ground temperatures and depth of seasonal thawing were much greater than is the case for the region today or than at any time during the Holocene because Holocene ice-wedges at the top of the bluff have not thawed completely.

The base of Unit 4c records a period of climate much warmer than at present, though the exact amount in degrees cannot yet be estimated. Forest seems to have been much more closed than at present, and tree line was undoubtedly located further north. This may have been a time when trees extended onto the coastal plain of the northern Yukon as they seem to have done in Northern Alaska (Carter and Ager, 1989). This was also a time when downcutting created the erosional disconformity between Units 4b and 4c at the downstream part of the section (where OCT is missing).

The start of climatic cooling following peak warming in Unit 4c is probably recorded by a unique zone of cryoturbation structures. Information on the climate history subsequent to this event is scanty, but involves at least one more time of regional thawing (the upper ice-wedge pseudomorph horizon) prior to 37 ka BP. At about 30 ka BP climate was apparently colder than at present. Lichti-Federovich's (1973) upper three pollen samples from Unit 4 show a trend toward herbaceous tundra (Fig. 3) and macrofossil Sample B, from near the top of Subunit 4c is dominated by tundra insects (Matthews, 1975). But we cannot be certain that Sample B, or even Lichti-Federovich's upper Unit 4 samples represent the final climatic decline leading to the Late Wisconsinan. As in the case in the Old Crow Basin (Morlan *et al.*, 1990), the flooding of the basin during the early stages of that lake or multiple flooding events during the Late Wisconsinan (Thorson and Dixon, 1983) probably disrupted the portion of the record leading into the Late Wisconsinan.

THE KOY-YUKON INTERGLACIATION AND CORRELATIVE DEPOSITS IN EAST BERINGIA

The plant and insect fossils associated with the base of Unit 4c and the peak of spruce pollen in Lichti-Federovich's original pollen diagram were originally referred to a very warm interstadial by Schweger and Matthews (1985). At the time, the age of Old Crow tephra was estimated to be approximately

85 ka BP so the most appropriate age for overlying warm climate sediments was early stage 3 of the marine isotope record. Schweger and Matthews (1985) proposed the informal name Koy-Yukon thermal event, for this warm interval and suggested that it was correlative with previously recognized post OCt warming intervals in the Fairbanks area of Alaska and western Alaska. Now that the most recent date on Old Crow tephra shows that it is as old as 150 ka BP, the Koy-Yukon thermal event more likely represents some part of isotope stage 5. In other words it is the best candidate for the last interglaciation in the northern Yukon. Because of problems created by calling

this interval the Sangamonian we have preserved the original local designation and refer the base of Unit 4c at Ch'jee's Bluff to the Koy-Yukon interglaciation (informal terminology). The Koy-Yukon interglaciation may not be the terrestrial equivalent of isotope stage 5e. Note in Figure 5 that it is preceded by a rise of spruce which is seen at other east Beringian sections that contain OCt (Fig. 8). Funder and others (1989) find that the warmest part of the last interglaciation in northwest Greenland occurred during a time probably correlative with marine isotope stage 5a rather than stage 5e. The same may be true in the Yukon and Alaska.

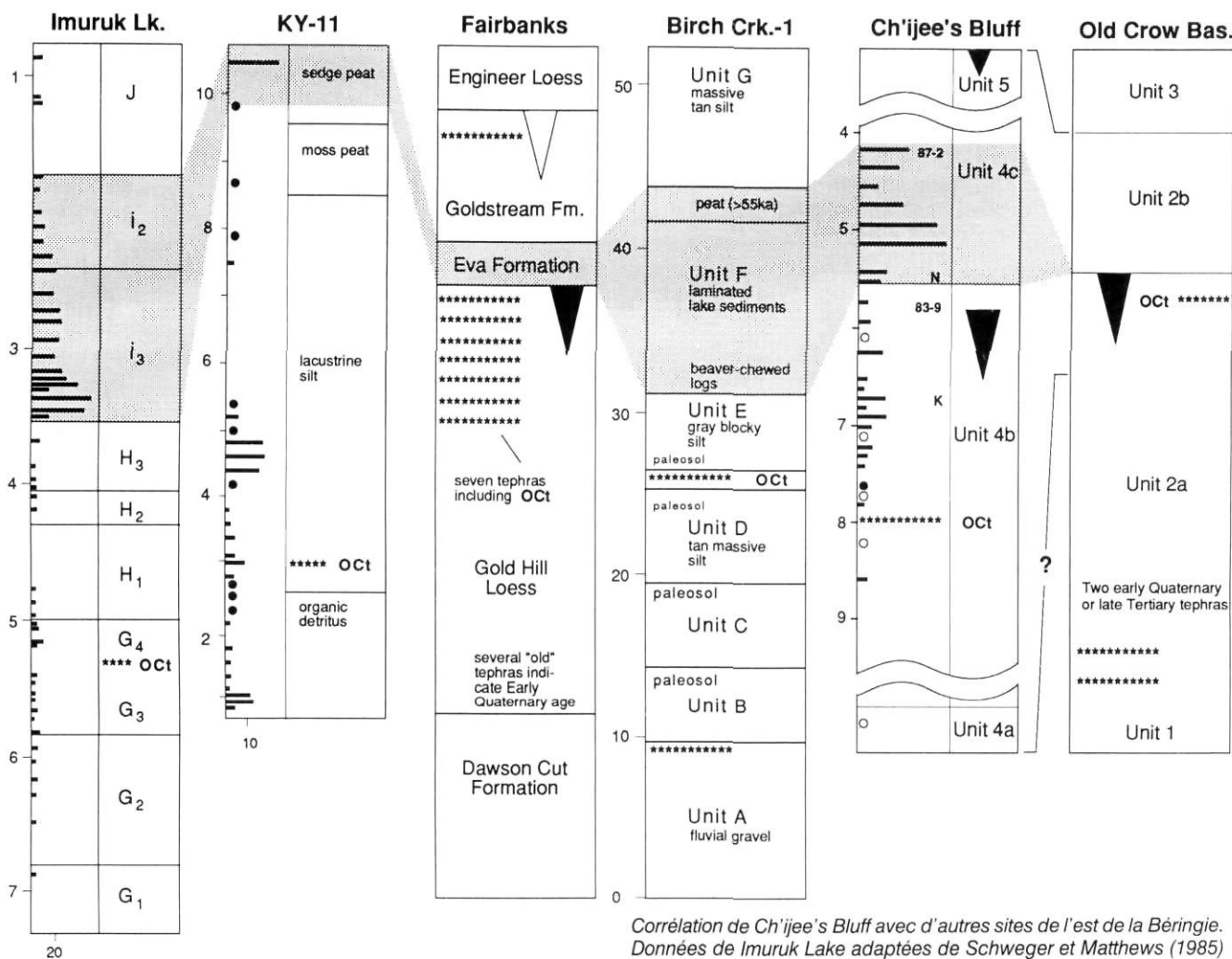


FIGURE 8. Correlation of Ch'jee's Bluff with other sites in east Beringia. Imuruk Lake data adapted from Schweger and Matthews (1985) which presented a recast of work published on Imuruk Lake by P. Colivaux and students. KY-11 data from Schweger and Matthews (1985). Fairbanks data adapted from Péwé (1989). Birch Creek-1 data adapted from Edwards (1989). Ch'jee's Bluff: this paper. Old Crow Basin from Schweger and Matthews (1985) and Matthews et al. (1987a). Bars shown in left column from Imuruk Lake, KY-11 and Ch'jee's Bluff represent percentages of spruce pollen. Closed circles from KY-11 indicate less than 2%. Dark wedges represent ice-wedge pseudomorphs; with wedges represent ice-wedges which have not thawed completely. Stippled zone represents the last interglaciation as interpreted in this report. Possible correlation of Ch'jee's Bluff Unit 4 and Old Crow Basin sections is shown by lines between the columns. OCt = Old Crow tephra.

Corrélation de Ch'jee's Bluff avec d'autres sites de l'est de la Béringie. Données de Imuruk Lake adaptées de Schweger et Matthews (1985) qui présentent une refonte du travail préparé par P. Colivaux et ses étudiants. Données de KY-11 de Schweger et Matthews (1985). Données de Fairbanks adaptées de Péwé (1989). Données de Birch Creek-1 adaptées de Edwards (1989). Ch'jee's Bluff: présent travail. Données du bassin de Old Crow de Schweger et Matthews (1985) et Matthews et al. (1987a). Les barres à la gauche des colonnes de Imuruk Lake, KY-11 et de Ch'jee's Bluff donnent le pourcentage du pollen d'épinette. Les points noirs dans la colonne de KY-11 indiquent un pourcentage inférieur à 2%. Les points noirs dans la colonne de Ch'jee's Bluff indiquent un pourcentage de 2-4%; les cercles blancs, inférieur à 2%. Les triangles noirs inversés sont des fentes de glace pseudomorphes; les triangles blancs sont des fentes de glace qui n'ont pas encore entièrement fondu. La zone en gris représente le dernier interglaciaire, tel qu'on l'interprète ici. La corrélation possible entre Ch'jee's Bluff et le bassin de Old Crow est montrée par les lignes qui relient les deux colonnes. OCt = tephra de Old Crow.

Figure 8 also shows the generalized stratigraphy of sections in the Old Crow Basin, which is near Bluefish Basin and Ch'ijee's Bluff (Fig. 1). A prominent unconformity marked in some cases by a turf and soil (Bombin, 1980) overlies silts and sands containing the Old Crow tephra and ice wedge pseudomorphs. This unconformity is overlain by several metres of alluvial and lacustrine sediments (Unit 4) which are capped by the glaciolacustrine clays of Unit 5 — the same unit seen at Ch'ijee's Bluff. At some Old Crow sections Unit 4 contains ice wedge pseudomorphs. In Schweger and Matthews (1985) it was suggested that the warming seen in Unit 4c at Ch'ijee's Bluff may be represented in Unit 4 of Old Crow Basin exposures. Recent accelerator dates on bones on the unconformity seem to rule this out. Instead, they suggest that sediments of Old Crow Unit 4 are no older than 38 ka. Unit 4 sediments at one of the best studied sections in Old Crow Basin also contain significant percentages of Paleozoic spores which are presumed to mark glacial meltwater overflow from the east upstream of Bell Basin (Fig. 1) (Hughes *et al.*, 1981; Walde, 1985). This finding, which is in substantial agreement with the new accelerator ^{14}C dates, probably means that Old Crow Unit 4 represents part of isotope stage 3 and early stage 2 rather than early stage 3 or stage 5 like Unit 4c at Ch'ijee's Bluff.

FUTURE WORK AT CH'IJEE'S BLUFF

This report is no more than an introduction to the complex biostratigraphic record preserved in Unit 4 at Ch'ijee's Bluff. While we believe these data do show that the last interglaciation occurs within Unit 4, there are many areas requiring future study. Some of the more obvious ones are:

- (1) More detailed pollen work at Station 4 and documentation of similar trends by detailed work at several other stations.
- (2) Further study of insects and plant macrofossils, molluscs and vertebrates from closely spaced samples in Unit 4c at Station 4 and other stations.
- (3) Investigation of the significance of the rise in spruce percentages which occurs above OCt and below the zone of maximum warming in Unit 4c.
- (4) Study of changes in ring widths in wood found at the base of Unit 4c, with the aim of recognizing short term (100-1000 yr) climatic fluctuations during the time of peak warming.
- (5) Detailed paleomagnetic studies such as those conducted by Gillen and Evans (1989) on Unit 4. Such a study might allow the strata correlative with OCt to be recognized even when tephra is not present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is CELIA report 1. The authors owe a debt of gratitude to the Boreal Institute of Northern Studies, University of Alberta, for sponsoring project CELIA and hosting planning workshops for the project. We also acknowledge the advice and encouragement of the CELIA research board. In 1987 Ch'ijee's Bluff was visited during an INQUA field excursion. The advice and suggestions offered by the participants on that excursion have sharpened our interpretation of the section, especially the needs for future research. Palynological research was carried on partly while CES was on sabbatical leave at the University of Tromsø, Norway. Partial support for CES was

provided by the Institute of Biology and Geology and the Norwegian Council for Sciences and Humanities (NAUF).

We thank Alice Telka, who has been involved in all aspects of the study of Ch'ijee's Bluff. A number of entomological colleagues (e.g., J. M. Campbell, V. Behan-Pelletier, I. Walker, Y. Bousquet) offered advice or helped with the identification of certain fossils. Finally, we appreciate the constructive comments offered by several reviewers: C. R. Harington, A. V. Morgan, R. Mott, and E. Nielsen.

REFERENCES

- Bartlein, P. J. and Prentice, I. C., 1989. Orbital variations, climate and paleoclimatology. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, 4: 195-199.
- Bassett, I. J. and Crompton, C. W., 1982. The genus *Chenopodium* in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Botany*, 60: 586-610.
- Béget, J. E., Stone, D. B. and Hawkins, D. B., 1990. Paleoclimatic forcing of magnetic susceptibility variations in Alaskan loess during the late Quaternary. *Geology*, 18: 40-43.
- Blake, W. J., 1984. Geological Survey of Canada Radiocarbon dates XXIV. Geological Survey of Canada, Paper 84-7, 35 p.
- , 1987. Geological Survey of Canada Radiocarbon dates XXVI. Geological Survey of Canada, Paper 86-7, 60 p.
- Bombin, M., 1980. Early and mid-Wisconsinan paleosols in the Old Crow Basin, Yukon Territory, Canada. In *Abstracts and Program, 6th biennial meeting of the American Quaternary Association (AMQUA)*, University of Maine, Orono, Maine, p. 37-38.
- Bostock, H. S., 1948. Physiography of the Canadian Cordillera, with special reference to the area north of fifty-fifth parallel. Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 247, 106 p.
- Bousquet, Y., 1988. *Dyschirius* of America north of Mexico: descriptions of new species with keys to species groups and species (Coleoptera: Carabidae). *The Canadian Entomologist*, 120: 361-387.
- Campbell, M. J., 1978. New species and records of New World Micropeplidae (Coleoptera) II. *The Canadian Entomologist*, 110: 1247-1258.
- Carter, L. D. and Ager, T. A., 1989. Late Pleistocene spruce (*Picea*) in the northern interior basins of Alaska and the Yukon: evidence from marine deposits in northern Alaska, p. 11, 14. In L. D. Carter, T. D. Hamilton and J. P. Galloway, eds., *Late Cenozoic History of the interior basins of Alaska and the Yukon*. United States Geological Survey Circular 1026.
- Coope, G. R., 1979. Coleoptera Analysis, p. 315-328. In B. E. Berglund, ed., *Palaeohydrological Changes in the Temperate zone in the last 15000 years. Subproject B. Lake and Mire Environments, Vol. II, Specific Methods*. International Geological Correlation Programme, Tornavågwn.
- Cwynar, L. C., 1982. A late-Quaternary vegetation history from Hanging Lake, Northern Yukon. *Ecological Monographs*, 52: 1-24.
- Dickinson, R. E. and Cicerone, R. J., 1986. Future global warming from atmospheric trace gases. *Nature*, 319: 109-115.
- Ecoregions Working Group, 1989. *Ecoclimatic Regions of Canada, First Approximation*. Sustainable Development Branch, Canadian Wildlife Service, 119 p.
- Edwards, M. E. and McDowell, P. F., 1989. Quaternary deposits at Birch Creek, Northeastern Interior Alaska: the possibility of climatic reconstruction, p. 48-50. In L. D. Carter, T. D. Hamilton and J. P. Galloway, eds., *Late Cenozoic History of the interior basins of Alaska and the Yukon*. United States Geological Survey Circular 1026.
- Funder, S. and NORDQUA 86 participants, 1989. The Baffin Bay region during the last interglaciation: evidence from northwest Greenland. *Géographie physique et Quaternaire*, 43: 255-262.
- Gillen, K. P. and Evans, M. E., 1989. New geomagnetic paleosecular variation results from the Old Crow Basin, Yukon Territory, and their use in stratigraphic correlation. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*, 26: 2507-2511.

- Harington, C. R., 1977. Pleistocene mammals of the Yukon Territory. Ph.D. thesis, University of Alberta.
- Heginbottom, J. A. and Vincent, J.-S., 1986: Correlation of Quaternary deposits and events around the margin of the Beaufort Sea: Contributions from a joint Canadian-American workshop, April 1984. Geological Survey of Canada, Open File Report 1237, p. 60.
- Hughes, O. L., 1972. Surficial geology of northern Yukon Territory and north-western District of Mackenzie, Northwest Territories. Geological Survey of Canada, Paper 69-36, 11 p.
- Hughes, O. L., Harington, C. R., Janssens, J. A., Matthews, J. V., Jr., Morlan, R. E., Rutter, N. W. and Schweger, C. E., 1981. Upper Pleistocene stratigraphy, paleoecology, and archaeology of the northern Yukon interior, eastern Beringia, 1. Bonnet Plume Basin. *Arctic*, 34: 329-365.
- James, M. T., 1981. Xylophagidae, p. 489-495. In J. F. McAlpine, B. V. Peterson, G. E. Shewell, H. J. Teskey, J. R. Vockeroth and D. M. Wood, eds., *Manual of Nearctic Diptera*, Vol. 1. Agriculture Canada, Ottawa.
- Jouzel, J., Lorius, C., Petit, J. R., Genthon, C., Barkov, N. I., Kotlyakov, V. M. and Petrov, V. M., 1987. Vostok ice core: a continuous isotope temperature record over the last climatic cycle (160,000 years). *Nature*, 329: 403-408.
- Klassen, R. A., Matthews, J. V., Jr., Mott, R. J. and Thompson, F. J., 1988. The stratigraphy and paleobotanical record of interglaciation in the Wabush region of western Labrador, p. 24-26. In C. R. Harington, ed., *Program, abstracts and news: Climatic Fluctuations and Man 3*. Canadian Committee on Climatic Fluctuations and Man. Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Jan. 28-29, 1988.
- Lawrence, J. R., 1973. Old Crow Basin, p. 307-314. In R. G. McCrossan, ed., *The Future Petroleum Provinces of Canada. Their Geology and Potential*. Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists.
- Lichti-Federovich, S., 1973. Palynology of six sections of late Quaternary sediments from the Old Crow River, Yukon Territory. *Canadian Journal of Botany*, 51: 553-564.
- 1974. Palynology of two sections of late Quaternary sediments from the Porcupine River, Yukon Territory. Geological Survey of Canada, Paper 74-23, 6 p.
- Lindroth, C. H., 1961. The ground-beetles (Carabidae excl. Cicindelinae) of Canada and Alaska, part 2. *Opuscula Entomologica*, Suppl., XX: 1-200.
- 1968. The ground-beetles (Carabidae excl. Cicindelinae) of Canada and Alaska, part 5. *Opuscula Entomologica*, Suppl. XXXIII: 649-944.
- Matthews, J. V., Jr., 1975. Insects and plant macrofossils from two Quaternary exposures in the Old Crow-Porcupine region, Yukon Territory, Canada. *Arctic and Alpine Research*, 7: 249-259.
- 1977. Tertiary Coleoptera fossils from the North American Arctic. *The Coleopterists Bulletin*, 31: 297-308.
- Matthews, J. V., Harington, C. R., Hughes, O. L., Morlan, R. E., Rutter, N. W., Schweger, C. E. and Tarnocai, C., 1987a. Schaeffer Mountain Lookout and Old Crow Basin stratigraphy/paleontology, p. 75-83. In S. R. Morison and C. A. S. Smith, eds., *Guidebook to Quaternary Research in Yukon*. XII INQUA Congress, National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.
- Matthews, J. V., Jr., Hughes, O. L. and Schweger, C. E., 1987b. Twelvemile Bluff exposure, p. 95-99. In S. R. Morison and C. A. S. Smith, eds., *Guidebook to Quaternary Research in Yukon*. XII INQUA Congress, National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, Canada.
- Matthews, J. V., Jr., Schweger, C. E. and Hughes, O. L., 1990. Plant and insect fossils from the Mayo Indian Village Section (Central Yukon): new data on Middle Wisconsinan environments and glaciation. *Géographie physique et Quaternaire*, 44: 15-26.
- Matthews, J. V., Jr. and Ovenden, L. E., in press. Late Tertiary plant macrofossils from localities in Arctic/Subarctic North America (Alaska, Yukon and Northwest Territories): a review of the data. *Arctic*
- Morgan, A. V., Morgan, A., Nelson, R. E. and Pilny, J., 1986. Current status of knowledge on the past and present distribution of the genus *Blethisa* (Coleoptera: Carabidae) in North America. *The Coleopterists Bulletin*, 40: 105-115.
- Morlan, R. E., 1980. Taphonomy and archaeology in the Upper Pleistocene of the northern Yukon Territory: a glimpse of the peopling of the New World. *Archaeological Survey of Canada Paper*, Ottawa, 398 p.
- Morlan, R. E., Nelson, D. E., Brown, T. A., Vogel, J. S. and Southon, J. R., 1990. Accelerator mass spectrometry dates on bones from Old Crow Basin, Northern Yukon Territory. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology*, 14: in press.
- Nelson, R. E., 1983. New records of *Blethisa catenaria* Brown (Coleoptera: Carabidae) from the American arctic, with notes on possible climatic tolerances. *The Coleopterists Bulletin*, 37: 168-172.
- Norris, D. K., 1976. Geology of Old Crow, Yukon Territory. Geological Survey of Canada Map 1518A 1: 250 000.
- Ovenden, L. E. and Brassard, G. R., 1989. Wetland vegetation near Old Crow, northern Yukon. *Canadian Journal of Botany*, 67: 954-960.
- Pearce, G. W., Westgate, J. A. and Robertson, S., 1982. Magnetic reversal history of Pleistocene sediments at Old Crow, northwestern Yukon Territory. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*, 19: 919-929.
- Péwé, T. L., 1989. Quaternary stratigraphy of the Fairbanks area, Alaska, p. 72-77. In L. D. Carter, T. D. Hamilton and J. P. Galloway, eds., *Late Cenozoic History of the interior basins of Alaska and the Yukon*. United States Geological Survey Circular 1026.
- Porsild, A. E. and Cody, W. J., 1980. Vascular plants of continental Northwest Territories, Canada. National Museums of Canada., Ottawa, 667 p.
- Ritchie, J. C., 1984. Past and Present Vegetation of the Far Northwest of Canada. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 251 p.
- Ruddiman, W. F., 1985. Climate studies in ocean cores, p. 197-257. In A. D. Hecht, ed., *Climate studies in ocean cores*, John Wiley & Sons.
- Schweger, C. E., in press. Late Tertiary-Early Pleistocene palynology and stratigraphy, Old Crow-Bluefish Basins, Northern Yukon, Canada. *Arctic*,
- Schweger, C. E. and Matthews, J. V., Jr., 1985. Early and Middle Wisconsinan environments of eastern Beringia: stratigraphic and paleoecological implications of the Old Crow tephra. *Géographie physique et Quaternaire*, 39: 275-290.
- Thorson, R. M. and Dixon, J. E., Jr., 1983. Alluvial history of the Porcupine River, Alaska: role of glacial-lake overflow from northwest Canada. *Bulletin of the Geological Society of America*, 94: 576-589.
- Wahl, H. E. and Goos, T. O., 1987. Climate, p. 7-12. In S. R. Morison and C. A. S. Smith, eds., *Guidebook to Quaternary Research in Yukon*, XII INQUA Congress, Ottawa.
- Walde, K., 1985. Pollen analysis and taphonomy of Locality 15 alluvial sediments, Old Crow Basin, Yukon. M.Sc. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, Edmonton.
- Welch, S. L. and Rigby, J. K., 1971. Botanical and photo reconnaissance of northern Yukon. Brigham Young Univ. Science Bulletin, Biological Series, 1-64.
- Westgate, J. A., 1988. Isothermal plateau fission-track age of the late Pleistocene Old Crow tephra, Alaska. *Geophysical Research Letters*, 15: 376-379.
- Westgate, J. A., Hamilton, T. D. and Gorton, M. P., 1983. Old Crow Tephra: a new late Pleistocene stratigraphic marker across North-Central Alaska and Western Yukon Territory. *Quaternary Research*, 19: 38-54.
- Westgate, J. A., Walter, R. C., Pearce, G. W. and Gorton, M. P., 1985. Distribution, stratigraphy, petrochemistry, and paleomagnetism of the late Pleistocene Old Crow tephra in Alaska and the Yukon. *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences*, 22, 893-906.
- Wiens, A. P., Rosenberg, D. M. and Snow, N. B. 1975. Species list of aquatic plants and animals collected from the Mackenzie and Porcupine River watersheds from 1971-1973. Environment Canada. Fish. Mar. Serv. Tech. Rep. 557.